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FARTHEST WEST





They took one last run in the water.

FARTHEST WEST

^{Mrs.}
By LAURA (ADAMS) ARMER

ILLUSTRATED BY
SIDNEY ARMER

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FARTHEST WEST

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To the members of
SAVE-THE-REDWOODS LEAGUE
THAT FAR-SEEING GROUP WHICH
KNOWS THE NEED OF SERVING THE
EARTH OUR MOTHER

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FARTHEST WEST

CHAPTER I

ON THE BEACH



PIGEON CREEK flowed westward toward the sea. Between shadowed banks green with deer ferns and lacy leaves of bleeding heart the mountain-born stream found its way. It ran past a small schoolhouse in a clearing, where stumps of giant redwoods told of a forest hewn down.

Westward flowed the stream at the base of grassy hills dotted with Jersey cows, grazing within sight and sound of the ocean. Toward the beach ran Pigeon Creek, making a sudden leap to the sands over a bank smoked with lavender lupines.

A group of children with their teacher followed the stream until it reached the steep cliff. There they paused to gaze at the moving, restless sea. Florence said to Miss Luella :

"The ocean looks like a lot of soapsuds ready to be blown into bubbles."

The little girl's blue eyes sparkled like the sea itself. Her yellow curls gleamed golden in the sunshine.

"It reminds me of soapsuds, too," answered the teacher. "The

bubbles are full of color on a morning like this. We should have a wonderful time on the beach today. Shall we go?"

On they ran, teacher and children glad of the holiday, glad of the March wind and sunlight. At the base of the cliff they again met the stream which hesitated as if awed by the breakers beating against the rocks.

Where the cove opened out in sun-warmed stretches of sand, Pigeon Creek moved gently on to mingle its sweet waters with the brine of the Pacific.

The children and Miss Luella took off their shoes and stockings and waded in the shallows. Above the noise of the pounding waves rose the sound of their laughter and shouting.

"Watch that big wave," called Edward, Florence's brother. "Watch it and then count the ones which follow it."

"I know, I know what you mean. The seventh wave is always a big one."

The sea broke upon the shore, then stole back to gather force from its depths. Again it swept near, bounding in unrest. Incessantly it moved, retreating with ribbons of seaweed entangled in foam.

Down the beach where low, kelp-covered rocks jutted into the water, a man with a fishing pole stood watching the breakers.

"It's the boss from the mill," said Edward. "It's Mr. Gayforth. I'm going to see if he has caught anything yet."

The boy ran on the wet sands until he reached the rocks and the fisherman. "Any luck?" he asked.

"Not much, Edward. The waves are too high for comfort-

able fishing. Watch out for that breaker. It's a big one."

The fisherman braced his booted feet against the rock, waiting for the crash of the breaker. It broke in white foam, leaving clear pools among the boulders. Edward, looking into one, saw tiny rock crabs scurrying about. He watched a sea anemone spread its petal-like feelers to lure the small crabs, unaware of danger. Petal-like feelers became cruel tentacles closing about the unsuspecting prey.

"These sea anemones know how to fish," called Edward to Mr. Gayforth. "They catch theirs every time."

"That's because they are hungry. It is a law of life to eat. Everything seems to be hungry. Look at those waves. The sea hungers for the land. The sea devours."

Mr. Gayforth put another sea worm on his hook. The fringed body of the worm twisted about his fingers.

"Yes, Edward," he continued, "all the rivers go into the sea, carrying with them wealth of the land, soil from eroded wastes, soil from the hills, loam from the meadows. The sea seems to be hungrier than all other things."

"I'm feeling pretty hungry myself," answered the boy. "I'd better be going back to our picnic basket. There will be plenty in it for you, I am sure. Good-by, Mr. Gayforth."

"Good-by, Edward."

The boy walked on the dry sand close to the bluffs. He watched the ground carefully, searching for something. He knew that after a southeast gale, the waves might cast ashore glass fishing floats escaped from Japanese nets to ride the current to America. After a storm Edward always searched on

the beach for the glass balls. He had a large collection of pale-green floats the size of the apples on his father's trees. He had two that were six inches through.

As he turned a bend where the cliff jutted out toward the sea, he climbed over a number of redwood logs washed up by the last storm. Black kelp, torn from the rocks, lay dry and stiff against the logs. As Edward's sharp eyes searched the sands he saw something shining and blue. He leaned over and brushed aside the seaweed. There lay a blue glass float a foot in diameter. Edward had never seen a fish-net float so large and blue. He picked it up and ran back to the cove where his companions were playing.

"See what I found !" he called excitedly. "I never saw a blue one before."

"My, what a beauty it is," said Florence. "It looks like a big blue moon. It's a bubble out of the soapsuds sea. I think it is wonderful how those fishing floats come clear across the ocean without getting broken."

"The sea growth on it is tropical. Mr. Gayforth told me once that fishing floats from Japan often go down to the South Seas in their travels. Here comes Mr. Gayforth now. Maybe he is ready for some lunch."

Miss Luella opened the picnic basket as the fisherman joined the group. He was a tall man wearing corduroys and heavy boots.

"Hello, everybody," he said, raising his hat to Miss Luella. "Have you all the lunch you need ? We could cook some fish."

"We have plenty, Mr. Gayforth. Sit down and help yourself."

All the children sat on the redwood log which long ago had washed up on the beach. Everyone ate stuffed eggs and sandwiches. Then Edward showed the blue glass ball to Mr. Gayforth.

"That is a fine one, Edward. There seems to be no end to the secrets this old sea has to offer."

"Do you like the sea and the fishing very much, Mr. Gayforth?" asked the teacher.

"To tell the truth, I dislike the sea. I dislike certain details of fishing. Sea worms with their fringed bodies make excellent bait but I don't like to put them on a hook."

"Why do you do it then?" asked Miss Luella.

"Because I want the fish. Catching him means success which overcomes dislike of the sea and, besides, every time I feel the tug of the line, I say: 'Now the sea will tell me some of its secrets.' It has many, Miss Luella."

"It has many," she answered. "Nobody knows what queer shapes hide in its depths. It holds secrets of ships gone down with lives and treasure. Sometimes on the beach we find bits of wreckage that must have come from across the sea, come with the Japan current."

"What I dislike most about the sea is its size. Children, has your teacher ever told you that the earth is three-fourths water and only one-fourth land?"

"Yes, sir, we had that in the second grade."

"Well, just look at those breakers smashing against the rocks. They are hungry for the land."

While the happy picnickers talked of the sea and its mysteries, one boy remained quiet. His dreamy eyes looked out past the arched rock, where waves dashed in white spray. He watched two pelicans in their flight. He saw them follow the crest of the billows and dive occasionally for fish. He heard the call of the gulls on the rocks. He seemed to hear the voice of the sea itself, the voice of the deep where secrets were buried. For dark-eyed John the sea held secrets about which he was silent.

When it was time to go back to the redwoods and to the homes among the trees, Miss Luella and her pupils took one last run in the shallow water. Then they put on their shoes and stockings and walked up the cliff trail. Higher and higher they climbed, over lichen-covered rocks, where fragrance of yerba buena and feathery artemisia replaced the rank smell of seaweed. Mr. Gayforth carried the lunch basket for Miss Luella. When they were all on top of the cliff they turned to take a final look at the ocean. Without limit, vast, profound, the Pacific stretched to a dim horizon.

"Three-fourths water, only one-fourth land ! I don't like it. I don't like it !" called Mr. Gayforth as he walked to where his Ford awaited him.

"What a strange person," said Florence, "to be worrying about there not being land enough."

CHAPTER II

JOHN'S MOTHER MAKES A RUG



Y THE time Miss Luella and her pupils neared Pigeon Creek, long shadows of scattered redwoods told of the setting sun. The children said good-by to their teacher as they reached their homes on the edge of the forest. "Good-by, children. Don't forget the composition subject I assigned, 'How to be Happy.' There should be good work after a day like this."

John, the dark-eyed boy, walked on with Miss Luella. She lived near the schoolhouse in a cabin of her own. At the gate to her garden John asked if she needed any firewood in her wood box.

"I think there is plenty, John. You had better not take time for my errands. It is late and I can hear your mother's cow mooing in the meadow."

"I know," answered John. "She wants to be milked. Good-night, Miss Luella."

John walked across a wooden bridge which spanned the stream. The water ran swiftly between banks green with

sword ferns and bleeding-heart leaves. The pink flowers of a wild-currant bush hung like glowing tassels against the moss-covered trunk of a leafless maple, spreading its branches above the stream. Trunk and limbs were thickly covered with licorice ferns.

Across the bridge a huge redwood stump rose from a mass of huckleberry bushes. Six young shoots from its base reached upward to the sky. Other stumps encircled the clearing, where the Jersey cow stood knee-deep in grass. She mooed as John opened a wooden gate and entered the pasture.

"I know, bossy, I'm late. Come on now, come on."

The cow followed John up a muddy road to the barn. At the feed rack she stopped for a mouthful of hay, while John fed barley and oats to the chickens, ducks and one big turkey gobbler who spread his tail with as much pride as a peacock.

When that was done John took a stool and called to the Jersey cow. She stood still, inside the barn, with her head poked between boards where her supper of hay kept her busy while John milked her.

All the cats of the barn stood around, waiting for their drink of milk which John poured from the pail into a pan. Fuzzy, the Angora cat, crowded in between the two big striped ones to get her share.

When the chores were finished John took the bucket of milk to his mother. She was waiting for him at the kitchen door.

"You are late tonight, John."

"Yes, Mother. We stayed longer than usual on the beach. I wish you had been with us. We had a wonderful time."

The mother's dark eyes looked deep into her boy's as she answered :

"You know I do not like the beach and the sea so much as you do."

Her voice was low and kind in tone as she spoke. It was the soft, sweet voice of the woods people who lived on the river banks long before white men came to the redwood country. John's mother was part Indian. Her skin was the color of the light-brown redwood sprays which strewed the ground in the woods.

John said no more about the sea and the picnic on the beach. He washed, and brushed his thick black hair. His mother put two pans of milk in the screened cooler ready for the morning cream. Then she served the supper. When that was finished and the dishes were washed, John and his mother sat by the fire in their living room.

Theirs was a small cottage where they lived alone. John's father had been killed five years before while hunting deer in the woods. His picture as a young man hung above the fireplace. It was a photograph of a strong, handsome Englishman. Next to it was one of John as a little boy, whose smile was like his father's.

Rows of bookshelves lined the space between the fireplace and the window. The shelves held the books which John's father had brought from England, books which he had studied at school as a boy, books which he read out of school, and books which meant much to him as a man. Besides *Robinson Crusoe*, *Pilgrim's Progress* and *The Last of the Mohicans*, there was a

fine edition of Shakespeare's plays. John had read many of his father's books.

His mother sat sewing in a rocking chair by the fire. Her work basket rested on a table near her. It was a finely woven Indian basket, its pattern made of the brown stems of five-finger ferns. John watched his mother's long slender fingers as she sewed together bright-colored strips of woolen cloth.

"How is the rug growing?" he asked.

"I will show it to you. It is turned to the wall at the end of the room. I should like to know what you think of the animals I am putting among the trees."

By the light of a coal-oil lamp John looked at the hooked rug his mother had started. It was large, about four by five feet. Trunks of redwood trees encircled a pool overhung with ferns and vines. The cloth strips waved in curves and swirls to indicate burls and branches on the trees. The color glowed warm with browns and purples.

"It is growing fine, Mother. It looks like my Wishing Place. There is the chipmunk all right. I like the blue color in the pool."

"Miss Luella brought that blue cloth to me. She gave me several pounds of fine, colored remnants she had bought at the woolen mills."

"Is this rug for Miss Luella?"

"Yes, she wants it to hang on her wall. She says my rugs are too good to put on the floor."

"I think so too," said John. "They are very good. I think that fox hiding in the shadow is a beauty."

John sat down by the fire again. He watched the little sparks eating their way on the soot-covered bricks. He said :

"Miss Luella has asked us all to write a composition on 'How to be Happy.' I wish you would tell me, Mother, some of the happy stories your grandfather used to tell you. Tell me about the salmon run in the spring. Tell me about the old canoes on the river. Tell me what calls the salmon up the river from the sea."

The woman let her sewing drop into her lap. The light in her eyes matched the glow in her son's as she spoke.

"My grandfather never told me what calls the salmon. He told me only of the making of the fish dams in the river, of the singing of his people, of the dancing of the young men and of the girls, of the spearing of the salmon. He told me of the elk, the deer, the panther, the turtle, the goose and the sea lion. My grandfather was a great hunter and one of the best of the fishermen."

"Did he like to walk in the forest?"

"He never said anything about liking things. He just lived, and sang the old songs in the winter time. You know that song about the trees, the one I used to sing to you?"

"Yes, Mother, I remember well. It was like this when you sang it in English :

*"Green forest home where the doe and fawn
Drink in the light of the breaking dawn.
Clear forest stream where the salmon glide
Under the ferns on the bank beside."*

John's voice was very sweet as he sang the woods song. His mother joined him on the second stanza. They often sang together in the evening.

*"Green forest home where the chipmunks play,
Hiding their nuts from the greedy jay.
Soft forest floor where the quail children pass,
Running about in the leaves and grass."*

"Green forest home, oh, green forest home," John continued to sing. "That song will be just right to start my composition with. There is nothing better than living near the forest. When I am at the Wishing Place I know what a good time the ancients had before any white people came."

"The first people were white too—so my grandfather said. He called them the Wigi-doko-wok. They were wise and kind. They lived in the forest with the birds and animals about them. They knew all the flowers and ferns, which were good to eat, which made medicine and which were needed for the baskets. They wanted the trees to stay in the forests and the fish to spawn in the streams."

"That is what I want, too, Mother. Tell me more about the old people."

"They were wise. They knew that the earth was their mother. They celebrated the mother's birthday in the spring-time, when the first fish ran up the streams, and buds were on all the berry bushes. My grandfather told me all."

"But about the Wigi-doko-wok—where did they go when the brown people came?"

"Nobody knows, John. Perhaps they went back to their first home far in the north. They taught our people what they know of basket making, of canoe building and of songs."

"Now, Mother, tell me more of my father. You did find him lying on the rocks at the shore, didn't you?"

The mother's eyes were dark and gloomy as she answered :

"Yes, John, that was when I was very young and living near the Cape. I was gathering mussels from the rocks at low tide. A heavy fog lay over land and sea. I could hear the fog horn at the Cape as I stooped over the rocks. It seemed to be crying : 'Watch out, watch out, all watch out.' As I jumped to a rock where a little pool of water gleamed in the fog, I saw the white hand of a man beckoning to me. The man was lying on the rocks. He could not speak, he was so weak. I lifted him from the cold rocks and managed to get him to a dry place. Then I ran to our house. Father and mother took care of him. The boat he had been traveling on was wrecked at Blunt's Reef, wrecked in the fog. He was the only passenger saved. He was a good swimmer."

"I am glad he was a good swimmer," said John. "My father was good at everything."

"He surely was, John. He could swim, he could ride, he could hunt, he could build, he could garden and, John, he could laugh and sing. He was the happiest person in all the world."

"I am glad that my father laughed and sang. Mother, do you know what I think?"

"What?" asked the brown-eyed woman.

"I think laughing is more important than 'most anything. I

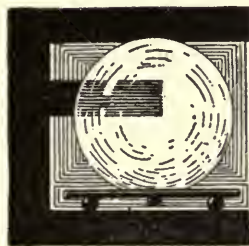
laugh nearly every time my pet chipmunk takes a nut in his paws. When he stuffs his cheeks full he looks like a clown making funny faces."

John puffed out his cheeks and played he was a chipmunk. When he heard his mother laughing he jumped about the room, gayer than ever. He made up his mind not to speak too often of his lost father. It would be best to talk of what happened at school.

"Do you know, Mother, Edward found a big blue fishing float on the beach today. He told me he is going to turn a stand for it out of redwood burl. His mother likes things like that."

CHAPTER III

SECRETS OF THE SEA



EDWARD WAS busy in his workshop at one end of his father's barn. He was turning the stand for the blue glass fishing float. He made a ring of redwood burl, a strong ring to fit the small part of the sphere. Edward had planned it in the style of the teakwood stands that held his mother's treasured bits of Chinese pottery.

Florence watched Edward as he worked. She thought her brother could do almost anything. "It will be so nice for mother's birthday," she said. "It will look well with the candlesticks you made for her."

"I wish you wouldn't talk so much, Florence Dayton. I have to think while I'm turning wood."

"All right, I won't talk too much. I'll just watch. I like the grain in that piece of wood. It has tiny rabbit feet all over it mixed up with ferns. It is a beauty, Edward. Is it ready now for the three little balls to be doweled on for feet?"

"Almost, but I have to help father with something. Don't touch the lathe while I'm outside."

Edward left the workshop to join his father, a busy dairyman. Florence sat down on a bench covered with wood dust from the lathe. She held the blue ball up to the light shining through a north window. The colors were mottled by the flecks and flaws in the crude blown glass. Florence looked and looked. She could see shapes moving in the ball. A cloud had crossed the blue sky, a cumulus cloud rearing fantastic forms as it floated. It was followed by another cloud, and another.

"How pretty the sky looks through the blue glass. The clouds are like all kinds of animals. There are birds and fish too. Look, Edward," she said to her brother who had come back to the workshop. "Look in the glass ball and I will tell your fortune."

"Silly," muttered the matter-of-fact Edward. "Nobody can tell a fortune. Anyway I wouldn't want to know what is going to happen. I'm too busy. Making turned things is hard work."

"Are you going to take time off for the picnic next Saturday?"

"No, I'm going to work. It's more fun. Besides, there's that composition to be finished."

"You like to fish, don't you? Mr. Gayforth asked Dick to go fishing with him on his favorite rock."

"Well, let Dick go. He hasn't anything else to do."

ON the next Saturday, as Dick climbed down the bank to the particular rock where Mr. Gayforth liked to fish, he was full

of excitement. When the bait was on the hook and the line cast into the water, he watched the rise and fall of the restless ocean. He watched the streamers of kelp writhe snakelike about the weighted fish line, bending the long pole in Mr. Gayforth's hand.

"You try your luck, Dick. I will hold on to you if you get a bite."

Steadily Dick and his friend watched the line at the point where it disappeared in the sea. Dick grasped the rod tightly, waiting for the quiver that would mean a fish. When it came, and the boy felt the tugging line, the bending rod, he called out :

"I've got one ! I've got one, but it's only a pogie."

While the fish gasped out its life upon the rocks, Mr. Gayforth told Dick to watch its color change from gold to green, from green to purple and then to common gray.

"It's queer about pogies. They look like rainbows when they come out of the sea, but air kills their color as well as themselves."

"I wish we could catch a sea trout," said Dick. "If we did I would give it to Miss Luella."

"I know that sea trout hide beneath the floating kelp. Let me try my luck, this time."

Sea trout were the fisherman's ideal of what fish should be — graceful, tapering, not lumpy like the blotched red sculpins which he sometimes hooked from the same waters. To Mr. Gayforth's disgust, he brought forth a blennie, which the people

of the coast call an eel. This was uglier than a sculpin, for it was mud-colored, snakelike and slippery.

"Well, that eel wouldn't please Miss Luella. You had better try again, Mr. Gayforth."

When a sea trout was finally captured, the fisherman disjoined his pole. He hooked the string of fish over his arm that he might have his hands free to help Dick up the notched log ladder.

"It was great fun, Mr. Gayforth. Why can't we cook the sea trout for lunch? Miss Luella and the rest of the children are down at the cove."

"That's a good idea. Let's do it."

The two fishermen joined the picnickers. The sea trout was carefully wrapped in many thicknesses of newspaper before it was placed in the coals to roast. Mr. Gayforth talked to Miss Luella while he watched the cooking.

"Have you found any more treasures today? Any more secrets of the sea?"

"We found some fine fossils in a bank, some of those fluted clamshells. The children will add them to their collection at school."

"I noticed that bank. It has been newly eroded. The sea is at its old tricks again, devouring the land. What do you think about it, John?"

The quiet boy looked earnestly at his friend. His face flushed a bit as he answered:

"I do not know what to think about anything, Mr. Gayforth. The rivers run into the sea but the sea sends back the fog and

the rain to the land. It seems to be a case of give and take so far as they are concerned. It is the people who do the most damage."

Mr. Gayforth turned the fish on the coals, then looked at John with much interest. "What do you mean by that?" he asked.

"I mean that people burn the forests and cut the old redwoods that took so long to grow." The boy looked anxiously at the mill boss. "You could save some of our redwoods, Mr. Gayforth. Don't let the big ones be cut down where we live."

Mr. Gayforth smiled one of his happy smiles, showing his gleaming, white teeth. He patted John on the shoulder, saying warmly :

"So you feel the same as I do about the trees. I'm glad, John, for there is need to save them. Old Mother Earth needs her trees. She needs her soil. I'm going to be careful about what we fell."

Miss Luella grew happier and happier as she listened. She loved the forest more than she loved the sea.

CHAPTER IV

THE TIMBER TRAIL



UST BACK of the Dayton barn, where the water tank perched on top of an ancient red-wood stump, a timber trail started up the hill. It led past a corral fenced with wood which had gathered lichens during the years, gray-green lichens which clung to the fence in velvety fullness.

Florence drove Peggy up the timber trail. They were on their way to the woods to get a load of pickets on the sled which Peggy hauled. Afternoon sunshine flecked the ground, making it glow like an Oriental rug rich in copper tints, all red and golden. The shoes which Florence wore were tan-colored.

They matched the fallen maple leaves lying in hollow places. Florence's sweater repeated the color of madrone bark.

The little girl walked beside the sled which Peggy pulled. "Get up," she called. "We have one more load to haul."

Curving and winding, the timber trail led past manzanita bushes with jade-green leaves stiffly springing from shining red limbs.

"Get up, Peggy, you are lazy today. Don't you know we have to get pickets for the strawberry patch?"

At the last bend in the trail a tiny stream of water ran flush with the surface of the ground. It crossed the trail. Peggy and Florence walked through it without muddying the water. The gravel lay undisturbed and pure in the bottom of the clear stream. A few feet away, in the shade of tall redwood trees, salmon-red pickets lay in a pile ready to be hauled to the Dayton ranch. Edward had helped his father to hew them in the fall. They had sawed a fallen tree and chopped the pickets from the easily split redwood.

Peggy whinnied when she saw Edward sitting on a heap of coral-colored sawdust. Florence turned the pony, ready to start on the home trail when the load was on. Then she sat down by Edward on the pink sawdust. She took an apple out of her pocket to give to her brother.

"Want half?" he asked. "I can break it with my hands."

"My, but your hands are strong, Edward. I couldn't do that."

"Swinging an ax makes my hands strong." The boy took a bite from the crisp apple. "It is good," he said. "I like the Baldwin apples better than the Bellflowers."

He finished the last bite of apple and threw the core into the brush. "Come on, now, let's start for home. We have pickets enough for that fence. Shall I drive Peggy?"

"No, I like to. You just watch out if any of the pickets fall off."

Back down the trail they trudged, through the woods where

early spring flowers bloomed in dark soil. At one place where wild-currant bushes hung over their heads, Florence called : "Whoa, Peggy." She gave the reins to Edward and climbed up a steep bank to gather a bouquet of white trilliums. The three white petals rose from a slender stem which sprang from a whorl of three large green leaves. Florence liked the trilliums better than any of the other wild flowers. She called them Easter lilies. She put her bouquet on top of the coral-red pickets and started driving Peggy.

"Isn't it queer," she said to Edward, "how the white Easter lilies turn pink when they get old? The very same flowers change from white to pink and almost to dark red."

"They are not like people. When people get old their hair changes from dark to white. People work backward or else the lilies do."

"You do think of funny things to say, Edward."

"I don't make things up the way you do. I just learn facts. Some day I'm going to be a chemist. I think that's the best way to learn facts."

"I know facts without learning them."

"How can you? How can anybody?"

"I don't know how it is but, on my last birthday, before I woke up in the morning I dreamed that I was going to sit at a table with candles burning in a circle. Lots of people back of the candles were saying mean things and making fun of John who was sitting next to me. I dreamed that John looked glum. He didn't smile a bit."

"John often looks glum," interrupted Edward. "I guess that's the Indian in him. Go on with your facts."

"Well, I wasn't feeling very happy myself with people making fun of John. I felt as if they were mad at me too. Then, all of a sudden, things changed. I noticed that there was a tear in the black suit which John wore. The tear was right on the knee—a three-cornered tear. I was afraid somebody would see it. I put my hand on the tear to cover it. That minute things changed. John smiled, the people stopped saying mean things. I felt very happy. Right on my plate I noticed a package tied with lovely ribbon. The paper on the package had pictures of little girls dressed in blue and pink. Every girl who had a blue dress wore a pink hat."

"Well," said Edward, "I suppose the girls with pink dresses wore blue hats."

"They did, and some of them carried tiny parasols."

"I suppose they were blue and pink too."

"The queer thing is the parasols were white."

"Where are the facts you were talking about, Florence? So far it's nothing but a dream."

"I haven't told you all. As I looked at the pretty package I noticed a lovely lady sitting near me. She was taller than anybody I ever saw. Her dress was of blue velvet, cut low to show her pretty throat. She looked the way a queen should look. In her ears were long earrings, so long they almost touched her shoulders. They were sparkling earrings, like a lot of stars."

"Where are the facts?" insisted Edward.

"I am sure that lady is a fact, but I can't prove it to you. I knew that John was related to her. He seemed as royal as the queenly lady."

"Florence, you are just telling another one of your fairy tales. Here we are at the corral and you haven't told me a single fact."

"Well, here it is: That morning I dreamed was my birthday. I was ten years old. I woke up in my bedroom and looked out the window at the robin's nest in the maple tree. The mother bird was feeding the little ones. She had a nice fat grub in her mouth, ready to drop into a wide-opened bill."

"That's the first fact you have told me. What happened next?"

"I lay still, feeling as if I were floating on a cloud. Then mother came in and said: 'Get up, lazy bones. You are ten years old, I shall have to spank you ten times.' I knew she wouldn't. She just kissed me."

"Fact number two," said Edward.

"Well, when I had my birthday party in the dining room, John sat on my left. He wore a black suit and he looked glum."

"Fact number three. I suppose there was a package tied up in paper with blue and pink ladies on it. I suppose mother was wearing diamond earrings."

"No, she wasn't, Edward, but there was a tear in the knee of John's pants. He tore it when he jumped over the fence instead of coming through the gate."

"Fact number four."

"I put my hand on John's knee to feel how bad the tear was. I thought I might mend it after the party. When I did that John smiled and I felt so happy. Mother was pouring water out of her pretty glass bottle. The water and the bottle and the glasses all sparkled like the earrings. Mother said : 'When a little girl has a birthday her mother feels like a queen.' Right that minute I knew what mother meant. I got up and kissed her."

"You do talk so much, Florence, you make me lose count of my facts."

"What's the difference, Edward? Mother was a queen because she said she felt like one. That made me a princess. I know that soon those earrings are going to be seen. They have something to do with John."

"Well, that's no fact and, as usual, you are making things up. Now let's carry these pickets to the strawberry patch."

"You carry them. I'm going to put the lilies in water."

Florence ran toward the house.

"Silly," muttered her matter-of-fact brother as he unhitched Peggy from the sled.

CHAPTER V

HOW TO BE HAPPY



LOUDS PILED in the sky and a strong wind blew from the south. The redwoods stood dark against the gray. Budding fruit trees in the orchards bent to the wind.

"There's a storm coming," said John to Miss Luella. "Have you plenty of wood for your house fire?"

"I could use some more, John, if you will bring it in. I think we are going to have a good, old-fashioned equinoctial storm. It is cold, too."

Miss Luella shivered a little as she put on her green wool sweater and walked toward the schoolhouse. She found the fire there burning brightly. John had attended to that. On her desk she noticed a bouquet of wild-currant flowers.

"They are so pretty," she said, "hanging like ornaments on a Christmas tree."

From a package of school papers which she had started to correct the night before, she took Edward's composition on "How to be Happy." She smiled as she corrected the spelling.

That boy is really wise, she thought as she read :

How to be Happy

Some people think that the only way to be happy is to be idle, but they are wrong. A little idleness is not a melancholy thing but a great deal is very melancholy. The only way to be happy is to have some occupation, any kind. Even to be entertained is very tiresome. When somebody works hard he forgets all about sorrow, but he can get a backache and it is a sign to stop. But when he stops he should do some quiet work as reading and writing.

Miss Luella pasted a gold star on the top of the paper. That will encourage Edward to go on with his writing, she thought. The boy really does work too hard for his age, helping his father on the farm.

Outside in the school yard the children were playing in the wind. Already big drops of rain were beginning to fall. Miss Luella rang the school bell early. The children took their seats at their desks, all eager to begin their lessons.

"Where is Florence?" asked the teacher, noticing a vacant seat. "She is late. Did your sister leave home with you, Edward?"

"No, ma'am. She left very early. She hurried to wash the breakfast dishes and fix our lunches, then she rode away on Peggy. She often does that, Miss Luella. She rides to her stump house in the woods."

"But she has never been late before," answered the teacher. "I think one of you boys should go for her. It is raining hard. Florence should not be out in the woods."

"Let me go," said Dick.

"No, I will go. She is my sister."

"May I go, Miss Luella?" asked John. "I have my rubber boots and I can walk fast."

"I think John had better look for Florence. He is the biggest boy."

"I will find her, Miss Luella. I know where her stump house is."

Up a woods road which soon turned into a narrow trail, John walked until he found the pony's tracks. Already the rain was washing the tracks away. Water was running on the trail. Some of the redwood trees were old ones in this grove. For some unknown reason they had not all been cut seventy years before, when the lumbermen were seeking the big trees. Under them grew a carpet of oxalis, its pink flowers brightening the dark woods. Yellow violets bloomed near pure-white trilliums. Ferns and moss covered all the fallen limbs and old stumps of the trees. It was the kind of place that Florence liked, the place to make her dream of strange people of the woods.

John approached the black stump of a redwood tree hewn in those early days when the white people first found the California forests. The stump was at least ten feet in diameter. It was hollow, just a shell of a trunk, blackened by forest fires of long ago and clothed with the greenest moss.

Beside the old tree stump a narrow stream of water flowed

from a spring a little higher on the hill. Along its banks tangled vines and shrubs were forced aside by rank-growing arums whose giant leaves spread like tents on the forest floor.

John noticed that the arums were flowering. He said to himself : "Those skunk cabbages certainly have good-looking flowers with their bright yellow spathes like cloaks wrapped around the spikes, but how they do smell !"

The entrance to the stump house was on the farther side of the trail. John was about to climb over a mossy log to reach it, when he heard a little noise that made him pause.

That sounds like a baby coon, he thought. I wonder if Florence has one for a pet in her house ?

As he stood in the rain, he could hear Florence inside the stump house talking in a low tone. Quietly he climbed over the log and went to the opening in the hollow stump. He tapped on the side of the tree and said : "May I come in ? Miss Luella sent me to look for you."

"Come in out of the rain, John. I know that I'm late for school, but I can't help it. I came here early to finish my composition on 'How to be Happy,' and see what I found."

Florence pointed to a fuzzy, soft little animal about the size of a kitten. It was crouched against the side of the tree trunk. Its eyes were closed, it was so young.

"How could such a baby get here ?" asked John. "He is too young to be away from his mother."

"I do not know how he came but here he is. His name is Pee-wee."

"How do you know his name is Pee-wee ?"

Florence laughed. Her blue eyes were merry as she answered :

"He told me so himself. He said : 'Pee-wee, Pee-wee, Pee-wee,' the moment I came in. He keeps on saying, 'Pee-wee.' Don't you hear him ?"

"I guess you're right, Florence. Are you going to school now ? Miss Luella is worried."

"I haven't finished 'How to be Happy.' I have just a little more to do. You see I was so happy when I found Pee-wee, I couldn't write."

"I know how it is, Florence. Read me what you wrote. Maybe it doesn't need finishing."

"It's a poem. You know I always write poems. This is the way it goes :

How to be Happy.

*Sleep a little, eat a little,
Sing a little, cry a little,
Walk a little, run a little,
Then fly away.*

*Fly away to rainbow land
With a fern frond in your hand.
Meet the fluffy clouds, and —*

"That's as far as I have written, John."

"You hand it in anyway. Now we must go back to school. Where is Peggy ?"



He tapped on the side of the tree and said: "May I come in?"

"She's just a little way down the trail. Wait until I get Pee-wee. Here, you carry him."

The rain came pouring down on the children as they started toward the schoolhouse, Florence riding Peggy. John sheltered Pee-wee under his coat. He ran on foot, keeping up with Peggy. The wind blew the rain in his face. He liked it. It brought color to his dark cheeks. He hugged the baby raccoon tight against him. When the schoolhouse was reached John tied Peggy in the shed while Florence went into the schoolroom. She put her poem on the teacher's desk and started toward her seat.

"But, Florence, your clothes are wet. You must get dry by the stove. You have upset things by being late."

"I couldn't help it, Miss Luella. I had to take care of Pee-wee."

All the children laughed. Miss Luella said: "We shall talk about this after school, whatever Pee-wee is. Now, we must go on with our lessons. I want every one to read his composition out loud for criticism. I think we have had some good ideas handed in, but there is much poor spelling. You must work harder on the spelling."

By this time John had taken his seat. He said nothing about Pee-wee, cuddled under his shirt. He rose to read his paper. He had read as far as the words:

Animals know how to be happy because they can stay in the fields and in the woods all of the time—

He had read that far when the baby raccoon inside his shirt began to cry: "Pee-wee, Pee-wee, Pee-wee."

Miss Luella looked surprised. Florence raised her hand. "Please, Miss Luella, may I take Pee-wee home? He is hungry."

"What in the world is Pee-wee?" asked the teacher.

"He is a baby coon that Florence found in her stump house. Here he is, Miss Luella. I think he needs some milk."

The teacher tried to keep order in the schoolroom. She said to John: "It is nearly noontime. You may be excused and go home for lunch. Take the coon with you and feed it. You live so near that it will not take long. Florence must stay after school to finish her poem."

Miss Luella looked at the furry kitten-like animal in John's hands. She couldn't help petting its soft fur. It squeaked in its baby way. She said to John:

"Take it home and feed it. Be sure to be back by one o'clock."

"Yes, ma'am, I will. My mother will care for Pee-wee till Florence is ready for him."

John went out in the rain with Pee-wee under his coat. Florence looked much disturbed as her new pet was taken out of sight. She mumbled to herself: "Nobody knows how to be happy."

Late that afternoon when the other children had gone home in the pouring rain she sat at her desk, trying to finish her poem. Miss Luella kept busy with a book. Florence worked very hard, scribbling things she did not like on many pieces of paper. Finally, with cheeks red and hot, and her yellow curls all frowzy, she walked to the teacher's desk.

“Here it is, Miss Luella. It is not very good. I never can say things the way they really are.”

Miss Luella read aloud :

How to be Happy

Sleep a little, eat a little.

Sing a little, cry a little

Walk a little, run a little,

Then fly away.

Fly away to rainbow land,

With a fern frond in your hand.

Wave it to a fluffy cloud,

Say hello, and say it loud,

Loud enough to cheer the sun

On his journey just begun.

That's how to be happy.

Fly away to fairyland

Wave the fern frond in your hand.

Say hello to moss and trees.

Say hello to birds and bees.

Say hello to little coon,

Little, furry, gray raccoon.

That's how to be happy.

When Miss Luella finished reading the poem, she put two gold stars on the paper. She smiled at the little girl and said :

“Now run and say hello to Pee-wee.”

CHAPTER VI

A CLUB IS PLANNED



AT HIS mother's garden gate John met Florence as she rode up on Peggy. "It is raining so hard," he said, "I put Pee-wee in a basket for you. My mother wrapped him up warm. She says you may keep the basket. She made it when she was a girl. It has a cover too."

"Oh, thank your mother for me, John. It is a beautiful basket. It will keep the rain off of Pee-wee. I know it is water-tight."

"You are going to get very wet yourself, Florence."

"I don't mind. The rain feels good. I am so hot. I thought I never would get that poem finished. I tore up page after page. I felt like crying. I wasn't happy at all."

John looked at his friend in surprise. "I thought you were always happy."

Florence put the basket in her lap and pulled the bridle to turn Peggy on to the trail for home. As her yellow curls bobbed and her red lips smiled good-by to John, he thought she

was as pretty as the wild-currant blossoms hanging over the stream. He said to himself :

“No wonder she can do things well. She is made that way.”

By the time Florence reached home she was soaking wet. She rode to the barn to unsaddle Peggy, then she carried the basket with the baby raccoon into the kitchen. She found her mother there preparing the vegetables for supper.

“Why are you so late, Florence ?”

“I had to stay after school.”

“Supper will be late, too, if you don’t hurry and change your clothes. Put on dry things and come back to peel the potatoes. We have company for supper.”

“Who is coming ?” asked Florence as she put the basket on a chair.

“Mr. Gayforth from the mill. He is bringing more pieces of redwood burl for Edward.”

“That’s good, I like Mr. Gayforth. He doesn’t talk too much about uninteresting things. He is a nice man. When Edward turns something on his lathe, Mr. Gayforth knows whether it is good or bad. If it is a bad shape he says : ‘Don’t waste that grain in the wood, it took a thousand years to grow. Take advantage of it, boy.’ Mr. Gayforth likes things that grow. The only queer thing about him is his fear about there not being land enough. He always says : ‘Only one-fourth land,’ when he looks at the breakers down at the beach.”

Florence took Pee-wee out of the basket to show to her mother. “See what I found in my stump house. Isn’t he cunning, Mother ?”

"For land's sake, what are you going to do with that coon?"

"Feed him first. He is such a baby. I think we will have to get a bottle for him. Now I will use a spoon for his milk."

"Florence, you must change your clothes and peel the potatoes. We have enough to do without taking care of wild animals."

Florence knew that if she kept quiet her mother would agree to her keeping Pee-wee. So she put him back in the warm basket, and hurried to change her clothes. When that was done she peeled the potatoes. All the while her cheeks grew hotter and hotter.

"What shall I do now, Mother?"

"Set the table next, while I tend to the pies in the oven."

"Have we any flowers for the centerpiece?"

"There are those trilliums you brought in yesterday."

The table looked very pretty with the white trilliums in their green leaves trailing over the edge of a bowl. The white tablecloth and napkins set off the pink and green Canton china which Florence took from the cupboard.

The Canton ware had been her grandmother's, long, long ago, when a ship from China brought it to California. Florence liked all the things which came from China. That was why she liked the story of the Unicorn whom the Chinese called Chee Lin. It was a wonderful fairy animal with a deer's body, a cow's tail and one long horn in the middle of its forehead. It appeared on earth when that great man Confucius was born in China. Florence often wondered if the Unicorn came tip-toeing along the trail when she was born. If he did, that meant

she was to be a person who did good to all the people in the world.

When the family and Mr. Gayforth were seated around the dining table, they talked of what had happened during the day. Edward said :

"It has rained so hard today that the creek is rising already. Maybe it will overflow again the way it did in January."

"This has been a hard spring for farmers," said Mr. Dayton. "It's too wet to plow."

"It is too wet for logging and chopping in the woods," answered Mr. Gayforth. "We are not sawing much at the mill, either, because over near the river the railroad can't operate on account of cave-ins. That is why I have time to go visiting. May I have another one of those wonderful rolls, Florence?"

As Mr. Gayforth helped himself he said to Florence : "And what happened to you, today, little girl?"

"I found Pee-wee in my stump house. I was late for school and finished my composition while Miss Luella waited for me. She put two gold stars on my paper. Then I came home but, on the way, John gave me a basket that his mother made when she was a girl. Pee-wee is in it now. Do you want to see him?"

"My goodness, how busy you have been. What is Pee-wee?"

"A baby coon with its eyes shut. I can't imagine how he got to my stump house. Someone must have put him there."

"I wonder who in the world could have done that. Have you any ideas about it?"

"None at all."

After supper the family sat in front of the log fire in the fireplace and listened to the story Mr. Gayforth liked best to tell. While the rain beat against the windows and the wind roared in the trees he spoke in his low voice :

"Did you ever think how all people like to tell stories while they sit around the fire ? Indians have always gathered about the fire to tell the old tales. Now, here we are, doing the same thing, telling old stories of the oldest living things on earth."

"And what are they, Mr. Gayforth ?" asked Edward.

"These redwood trees we live among. These redwood trees which grow only in northern California and southern Oregon, are the oldest living things on old Mother Earth. Once, millions of years ago, they grew in most parts of the northern hemisphere, in Europe, Asia and North America. Even on an island in Bering Strait there are fossil redwood trees. Today only ice is there. All of the redwood forests have gone from the earth, except here."

"Why is that, Mr. Gayforth ?"

"Changing climate did it. The glaciers crept over the north and drove life south. The redwoods cannot live in too cold a climate. They must have rain and fog, too. This northern California coast is just right for them. They have been growing here for forty million years."

"You don't mean these same trees, do you ?" asked Florence.

"Of course he doesn't," answered Edward. "He means the old family of redwoods."

"Well, how long have the trees back of our barn been growing?"

"Those are good old trees, Florence, as fine and large as any that are left. They may be as old as Confucius would be, were he still alive."

"How old is that?" asked Edward.

"About twenty-five hundred years."

Florence sat looking into the fire as if she could see far back to the time of Confucius when the Unicorn came to announce the birth of the great man. She said dreamily :

"It is nice to think these trees were babies when Confucius was a little boy. I am sure he would have liked to see them."

"What makes you so interested in Confucius?" asked Mr. Gayforth.

"I don't know. I just like the stories I read about him and China. I like the pretty dishes that come from there, but I never saw a Chinaman."

"We don't have them here," said her father. "We drove them all out of the country, back in 1885, when they had a tong war and accidentally killed one of our councilmen. We told them to take their heathenish fights somewhere else."

"That's not so bad as what happened to the Indians," said Florence. "John told me how great numbers of his mother's people were massacred on Gunther Island. Why do white people hate those who are not white? Why does anybody hate anybody?"

"Because he's hungry," answered Edward. "If you had bread and butter and jam and I had none, I should hate you."

"Oh, Edward, Edward!" cried the mother. "That is terrible!"

"Don't you believe everything Edward says, Mother. Anyway, if he had no bread and jam, I would give him mine. Then he would love me."

Her father laughed. He couldn't help saying: "The way to a man's heart is through his stomach."

"Florence is learning early," said Mr. Gayforth. "How did we get to this subject when we started to talk about trees?"

"It doesn't matter, Mr. Gayforth. Please tell us some more about the big trees."

"Well, where did we leave off?" asked the kindly man.

"At Confucius, when these trees by the barn were seedlings."

"All right, now we will go on for a little way and then I must leave for home. The storm seems to be getting worse. Did you ever think about who were the first people to see these beautiful trees?"

"It must have been the Indians," said Edward. "They were here first, before any white people."

"It must have been the Indians, true. They probably came from Asia, the same way the redwoods came, across Bering Strait. When the trees grew on what is now an island, there was probably a land passage up there. Of course the Indians came years and years later, after the glaciers began to recede."

"I should like to know what those first Indians thought when they saw the biggest trees in the world," said Florence.

"They must have thought," answered Edward, "that here

was a good place to camp, plenty of game, plenty of berries and the rivers full of fish."

"That must be true, Edward. Those people who trekked down from the north were looking for food. Here they found plenty. Besides, they could make dugout canoes from the redwoods."

"I think Indians were much smarter than white men," said Florence. "They had to learn out of nothing how to make fire, how to dress skins for clothes, how to make bows and arrows. White people only have to go to a store and buy screws and saws and things for their tools. We never could make such nice baskets to cook in, as John's mother made. She gave me one today to keep Pee-wee in."

"Where is Pee-wee? I should like to see him."

"I will show him to you."

Florence went into the kitchen to get the basket with the baby raccoon. She found that he was crying. She took him to Mr. Gayforth.

"He cries a lot, Mr. Gayforth. It is hard for him to eat out of a spoon."

Mr. Gayforth held Pee-wee in his hands and petted him. "You poor little orphan," he said. "How are you ever going to get along until you are big enough to catch chickens?"

Florence stood looking at Mr. Gayforth and Pee-wee. The man seemed so big and strong, the raccoon so tiny and weak. Florence thought: Mr. Gayforth is very kind. He will help me take care of Pee-wee.

She said to him : "Mr. Gayforth, I will give you half of Pee-wee if you will help me take care of him."

"Which half do I get?" teased the mill boss.

"You know what I mean, half the fun of him. He could be yours and mine together."

The big man looked at the little girl with the yellow curls and pink cheeks. Her eagerness shone in her eyes. He remembered all the nice things she had said about sharing bread and jam with Edward. He remembered her belief in the Unicorn, her interest in Confucius. An idea came to him suddenly. He said impulsively :

"Florence, it's a go, but if you let me have half the fun of Pee-wee you must accept half the fun of my pet."

"What is your pet, Mr. Gayforth?"

"The redwood forest back of your father's barn. I want to take care of it and I need help, lots of help. We must not let those trees as old as Confucius be cut down for lumber."

"But what can I do to help?" asked Florence. "I do not want them cut, but probably the people who own the trees and the land do not care. Do you know whose trees they are?"

"No, but I can find out. First we must start a club. We will call it the Pee-wee Club. I shall be president and you vice-president. We will find a way to buy those trees, to keep them for all the children who are to come."

Florence looked at Mr. Gayforth smiling down upon her. She seemed to see a light shining all around him. Maybe that was because he stood with his back to the fire. Anyway she saw the light. It was blue like the color which flickered in the

glass fishing float standing on the sideboard. The little girl said softly :

“I know that when you were born the Unicorn came dancing through the woods to tell the people, just the way he did when Confucius was born. I know it.”

“And I know he came when you were born, Florence. He must have said to himself : ‘Here is the future vice-president of the Pee-wee Club who will help to save the redwoods forever and forever, amen.’”

CHAPTER VII

HIGH WATER



AFTER MR. GAYFORTH left the house to drive home in the pouring rain, Florence fed Pee-wee and started for her bedroom. She stopped to kiss her parents good-night as she always did at bedtime. Her mother noticed how red were her little girl's cheeks. She put her hand on Florence's forehead. "It feels hot," she said.

"I do not feel hot, I'm cold all over."

"My goodness, child, you're shaking as if you had a chill. Get into bed as fast as you can, and I will bring you some hot lemonade."

Edward, who was busy looking at the pieces of redwood burl Mr. Gayforth had brought, said :

"Florence was out in the rain. She was very wet when she came in late for school."

"I have been wet lots of times and it never mattered. I don't think the weather hurts me. It's something else."

"Well, whatever it is, you must get into bed at once."

When her mother took the hot lemonade to Florence she

said : "Drink this and try to sleep. You will be all right in the morning."

"All right, I will, but maybe I have the measles."

"What makes you think you have the measles?"

"Because the last time I went to Helen's house to play, the Indian woman who was washing for Helen's mother said all her children had the measles. She said they had spots all over their faces. Helen and I went to see what color the spots were. Helen said measles on a dark skin might be blue. So we went to see."

"Florence, I thought you knew better than to run into danger like that. If you and Helen get the measles, then all the other children will. The school will have to close."

"Well, Mother, maybe I won't ; maybe it's just a cold."

In the night Florence's mother noticed that the little girl coughed and was restless. By morning the fever was very high.

"We should send for the doctor," she said to her husband. "I do not like to take any chances with such high temperature."

"Nor do I. We must get Dr. Kramer out here as soon as possible. I will drive to the school and phone."

When the father reached the schoolhouse he was told that the telephone wires were down. Soft ground beside the road had slid, carrying the poles with it.

"Then I shall have to drive to town. Will you please excuse Edward, Miss Luella, so he may go home and tell his mother that I am driving in for the doctor?"

As Florence's father was about to leave the schoolhouse John spoke to him shyly.

"Please, Mr. Dayton, if I can help Florence, I want to. I can tell my mother. She knows many ways to cure people who are sick."

"Thanks, my boy, but I want a doctor." He was about to add: "Not an Indian medicine woman," but he thought better of it.

Off he drove, down the muddy road, while the rain poured on his windshield. Back and forth, moved the wiper in its semi-circle, keeping time to the driver's thoughts as he rode through the gloomy woods. He drove carefully and slowly to avoid skidding. He noticed small slides from the banks in many places, where clumps of ferns and berry bushes had fallen on the road.

As he slowed his car to get safely over a large clump of sword ferns, he heard a loud crash ahead. Turning a bend in the road he found that a redwood had fallen, barring his way entirely.

The medium-sized tree had been growing too near the edge of the bank. It fell, uprooted, across the trail, its mass of green foliage still shaking from the impact with the ground.

"Well, that's the time I just missed being killed," said Mr. Dayton, "but it is plain to see there's no getting to town."

He wasted little time about returning home. He had to back his car on the narrow road until he found a place wide enough to turn in. Below him the mountain stream roared like a real river, so full it was of muddy water from the hillsides.

At home he found Florence very ill indeed. Mrs. Dayton

was so worried because they could not get the doctor that she said desperately :

"We must have help. Do you think John's mother would know what to do? She is very wise about herbs and roots."

"We might talk with her," said the father, "but it is just too bad if civilized people have to learn from Indians."

"I am so civilized," answered the worried mother, "I don't know one plant from another, when it comes to using them for medicine. That Indian woman does. Ask her to come."

Out in the rain again went Mr. Dayton. At the cabin he found John's mother cooking in the kitchen.

"Good morning," he said. "Florence is very sick. I cannot get the doctor. Mrs. Dayton asks you to come and help her."

The woman looked up from her cooking. She said quietly : "What kind of sickness has Florence? Is there fever?"

"Yes, a bad fever and some cough."

"I will go very soon. First I must get some medicines."

She went to a cupboard and took out some pieces of dry brown bark, which she wrapped in a paper. Then she removed her cooking pots from the stove.

"We can go now. This is the sacred bark. It is good to make a tea of it for Florence. By the side of the bridge stop the car. I wish to gather leaves for a poultice."

When John's mother entered the bedroom where Florence lay tossing and mumbling, the child called out in her delirium :

"Get out of here, I don't want all the world in my bedroom. I only want Pee-wee."

The quiet woman felt Florence's cheeks, so flushed and hot. She said kindly :

"Drink this tea, little one. It will make you better. The bark grew where Pee-wee was born."

"It tastes bad," said Florence. "It is bitter."

"Yes, it is bitter. Have you pain anywhere?"

"It hurts here." Florence put her hand on her chest.

"I will make the pain better. I will put this poultice of leaves on your chest."

Tenderly she cared for Florence. She rubbed her aching forehead and coaxed her to close her eyes. The child fell asleep, saying : "I want Pee-wee. I want Pee-wee. I know he must be hungry."

All day John's mother stayed in the house, renewing poultices and listening when Florence coughed.

In the meantime Mr. Dayton and the neighbors worked in the rain to clear the fallen redwood from the road. John and Edward helped the men. They swung their axes with energy.

Edward was a born woodsman. He liked the feel of the ax on the yielding wood. As the chips flew from the V-shaped notch in the log, Edward's contentment increased. He said to John :

"Bring the crosscut saw now and we will finish the job."

With a boy at each end of the saw, pulling it back and forth, the tree was soon severed. All the men pushed it down the hillside to rest among shrubs and ferns at the edge of the stream.

"What shall we do now?" asked Edward who was always looking for more work. His father said :

"You and John jump in the car and we will ride toward the river. I want to get to the doctor if possible."

A few miles of driving up a steep grade and then around a rocky hillside, dripping with water and hung with five-finger ferns, brought the car to a spot far above the river.

"My, but the water is high," said Edward, "almost as high as it was in January."

"It will be still higher in a few days," answered his father, pointing to distant mountains that showed a rim of white above the wooded hills. "When that snow melts, we'll have to look out for floods."

At the bridge over the river Mr. Dayton stopped the car to watch the redwood logs drifting down the current.

"They have broken away from somewhere," he said, "and they're all making for the ocean."

The three people watched one brown log after another float toward the bridge, to come out on the other side.

"What is that coming now?" asked Edward.

"It looks like a bear riding a log," answered John. "It is a bear come down from the mountains."

"He is not full-grown," said Edward. "I wish we could get him."

In his excitement he jumped out of the car and ran as near as he could to the river, calling out : "Why don't you swim? Come on, you can make it."

John laughed. Mr. Dayton laughed, too, because Edward kept on talking to the bear as the log neared the bridge.

"Jump in and swim," called the boy.

To everyone's surprise the bear did jump into the swift current and headed for the edge of the river. It was a hard struggle to swim to the water which ran more quietly. Edward watched.

"He's making it, he's making it!" he shouted.

There, on a piece of gravel bar overgrown with willows, Edward watched the bear swim toward him. When the frightened animal gained the land he faced Edward and grunted. The two looked at each other. Edward was much surprised to see that the bear was wearing a leather strap about his neck.

"He's somebody's pet," he called. "He is wearing a collar."

Then he said to the furry beast whose coat was wet from his swim: "Come on, Pal, there's room on the running board for you."

The bear followed Edward to the car, while Mr. Dayton kept calling: "Hurry up, hurry up! We have to get to town. I don't see what you are going to do with that bear."

"I'm going to find his owner and get a reward, that's what."

"Well, you certainly never miss a chance, Edward, for making trades and thinking of the dollars. I suppose you will succeed again as you always do."

John looked on, not much interested. He knew the ways of bears. He thought they belonged in the woods, but he helped Edward tie the cub on the running board. There was a ring



"Why don't you swim? Come on, you can make it."

in the strap around the young bear's neck. The boys put a rope through that.

The people in town stared as the car was parked near the doctor's office. While Mr. Dayton went in to see the doctor the boys stayed near the bear and answered questions.

"Did you look on his collar for a name?" asked one man. "That might be the bear Mike Farrell had up at his ranch."

Edward examined the leather strap. "There is no name," he said. "What is the address of Mike Farrell? I shall write to him."

When he had the address written down he entered the drug store to buy a postal card. He borrowed a pen and wrote :

Dear Mr. Farrell :

Bear found with collar. Same may be had by paying expenses and one dollar extra. Address

Edward Dayton, Pigeon Creek, Cal.

Back in the car Edward said to John : "I like this young bear. I wouldn't mind keeping him myself."

"Bears are no good. They are too rough when they grow up. You can't trust them. This yearling is nearly full-grown. Florence would be afraid of him."

"Florence isn't afraid of anything in the world," answered Edward. "The bear would make her laugh. If she laughs she will get well."

"She will be all right," said John. "My mother will make her well."

John arrived home in time to milk the cow. As he wished Edward and his father good-night, he added : "Tell my mother to stay all night with Florence. I can tend to things here."

He watched the car move on in the pouring rain. He thought the young bear looked frightened as it huddled on the running board. "Poor brown fuzzy-wuzzy," he said, "he must be hungry after his long ride on the log."

When the chores were finished and John sat alone, eating his supper, he heard a loud crash outside in the rain. Trees are falling, he thought. The soil is so mushy the roots cannot hold.

The stream roared louder and louder as it cut into the banks of rich soil, carrying with it precious loam and vines from the strawberry patch. The wind howled in the treetops. John thought of Florence, ill at her home. He was glad his mother was with her. She would not let the little girl get frightened by the storm.

The boy went to bed and slept soundly. When he awoke in the morning the rain was still coming down. Outside in the barnyard he walked through deep mud to reach the barn where the Jersey cow stood safe and dry. He noticed that three maple trees and an alder were lying across the muddy stream.

"Lots of wood chopping to do," he said to the cow he was milking. "Maybe I can get Edward to help me."

CHAPTER VIII

HOW THE ROBIN GOT HIS RED BREAST



IN FLORENCE'S attic bedroom the wall slanted down on one side to meet a low window, curtained with pink and green cotton print. Outside the window bare branches of a tall maple tree made a pattern against the stormy sky. In a crotch of the tree close to the window, Florence could see a robin's nest left from last year. She liked to think of the blue eggs that had hatched into baby birds, now flown away to other trees.

As the little girl lay patiently in bed, waiting for spots which would mean measles to appear on her face and arms, she told John's mother about the young birds. She said sleepily :

"Tell me more about the robins. Did they really and truly get their red breasts from eating too many madrone berries?"

"That is what my grandfather told me. It was a long time ago when Robin Redbreast was a handsome young man who lived near the river in a mansion of many rooms. He was so very good-looking that every young girl, who saw him walking among the trees, wished that she might be his wife. Robin

was handsome but he was selfish. He loved nobody but himself. He had many servants to keep his mansion clean and beautiful. He liked bright colors. When a girl would come to his mansion he always asked the keeper at the gate what kind of dress she wore. 'Only a poor brown dress,' answered the keeper. 'Don't let her in then, I cannot stand plain brown. I like pretty colors.'"

"So do I," said Florence.

John's mother straightened the pillow under the little girl's head before she went on with her story.

"One day the last girl in the world came to Robin's mansion. She was so beautiful and modest! 'What is she dressed in?' asked Robin. 'She wears a gown of brilliant red trimmed with spangles of madrone berries.' 'Show her in, show her in,' said Robin. 'At last I shall see some good color.' The handsome Robin looked greedily at the madrone berries dangling about the skirt of the girl. He wanted them. He made promises to the lovely girl and said he would marry her the next day and they would live happily ever after. He took her to one of his splendid rooms and told her to go to sleep. 'Pleasant dreams to you,' he said as he went out of the room. The young girl was tired from so much excitement so she decided to go to bed. She took off her gown all draped with bright orange berries of the madrone tree. She laid it carefully on a chair and went sound asleep. That is what you must do soon, Florence."

"Not until you tell me what happened."

"I have told you twice already."

"I know, but I like the story even if the end is sad."

"Well, you have heard how Robin stole into the bedroom at night and ate all the berries off of the pretty dress."

"And left just the bare stems, I know."

"Yes, he ate all the beautiful madrone berries while the girl slept. He was so greedy and ate so fast the juice ran down on his breast. That is why it is red. When there were no berries left he changed his mansion into a cold damp place just like the woods when the leaves fall, the berries are gone and winter comes. After that Robin Redbreast flew away as a bird."

"Did the girl cry very much?" asked Florence.

"She did at first. She cried so much her tears helped to moisten the ground around the madrone trees. Their bark grew redder and more satiny. Their leaves spread, making a shade which was wonderful on hot days. The girl saw the beauty of the trees and in the autumn when the orange berries came, she made a new dress."

"I should like a dress as pretty as hers," said Florence, "but I should not like to have it eaten by any greedy person."

"It wouldn't matter dear, if it were. That is what happens to all of us. If we like a thing too much we become selfish ourselves. The best way is to share good things."

The little girl looked up at the kind woman who leaned over her bed. She whispered:

"I would give everything in the world, even Pee-wee, to Mr. Gayforth."

John's mother looked closely at the child. She said nothing

about the red spots showing on her face. The measles were appearing. She went into the kitchen to tell Florence's mother, who answered :

"I am glad it is nothing worse, thanks to you. She might have had pneumonia too, if you had not kept those poultices on her chest."

"We must watch her closely, Mrs. Dayton. I will stay to help. But Florence will soon be well. The medicine the doctor sent is helping, too."

Edward came into the kitchen at this time. He held a letter in his hand. "Listen to this," he said. "It was Mike Farrell's bear we found." He read :

Mr. Edward Dayton :

The yearling cub is mine if his collar is tight. He disappeared some months ago. Me and Mother have been some worried for fear he would grow too big for his collar. We want him back. Enclosed is one dollar for his keep till I can drive down the road for him. Seems like the whole mountain is sliding across the trail. That yearling cub likes canned goods, any kind from strawberry jam to corn beef hash.

Yours truly,

Mike Farrell

"Does Mike Farrell think I'm going to feed that bear on strawberry jam?" asked Mrs. Dayton indignantly.

"A bear will eat anything," said John's mother. "We can save all the table scraps for him."

Edward asked how Florence was. "May I show her the bear?" he asked. "I am sure he would make her laugh."

"Florence has the measles and you are not to go near her, Edward. You will have to take care of her coon as well as of the bear. I never thought my yard would be turned into a zoo."

"It's not, Mother. I have to keep the animals in the woodshed out of the rain. I have the bear chained. I had to make a new collar because the old one was pretty tight. Now I will give the yearling his dinner."

"Feed Pee-wee too. Here is the bottle of milk I fixed for him."

CHAPTER IX

GREEN FOREST HOME



IN THE DEPTH of the redwood forest back of the Dayton barn, tall trees locked their leafy arms together in close companionship. Dark brown trunks of the largest ones rose fifty feet above the ground before a single branch stretched forth to meet the sister branches of other trees.

Light filtering through the green fell on soil softer than any velvet carpet—leaf mold made through the centuries by fallen leaves and rotting branches. Out of the soil, clumps of sword ferns grew in colonies of green. In some places the oxalis, with its three-parted leaves like clover leaves, covered every inch of the ground. The first lavender-pink flowers of the season opened to the soft light which rested on the forest floor. White-flowered trilliums glowed luminously amid all the tender green.

No sound disturbed the forest. No wind moved in the tree-tops. No rain fell among the ferns and wildflowers. No bird notes told that spring was preparing a feast among the crimson-flowered salmon berries.

John walked in the forest alone. His feet sank into the brown carpet of redwood sprays. His eyes searched every mossy bank for the first yellow violets of the season. He wanted Florence to have them. It took time to pick enough for a real bouquet. As John leaned over to gather a few more of the yellow flowers he heard a whirring noise, high above him. The sound increased to a loud drone then faded gradually away.

Wild pigeons, he thought. There must be a big flock flying over the redwoods to make such a roaring.

He could not see the birds, for he was walking in the deepest forest, but he knew the sound of the wings. The silence returned. John sat down to arrange the violets for Florence. A sweet woodsy smell of ferns filled the air.

"That smell of ferns always makes me feel queer," said John, speaking to himself. "It is a smell that makes me think of deer. When I think of deer I think of my father. I wish he had not been killed. I wish, I wish, oh, I wish so many things when I walk in the forest."

The boy walked on, thinking of his father. He could remember him coming home from a fishing trip. He could remember how he played with him, how he told stories of far places, stories of the mansion back in England full of rooms and servants, like Robin Redbreast's mansion.

"I suppose I shall have to go there some time, but I like this place better than any. This is my mother's home here among the trees. I wish I could find where home really is."

John was thinking out loud. He supposed he was alone in

the forest. He was much surprised when a voice answered :
"Home is here, home is here."

John looked about. On a log he saw an old man sitting, with a basket at his feet and a trowel in his hand. The basket held lily bulbs carefully dug from the damp soil. John recognized an old friend.

"How do you do, Mr. Morris," he said. "What are you getting in the woods today?"

"Bulbs for my garden. I need some more Clintonias and Adder's Tongues. Of course it is not so good to dig them up now but, if I get soil enough around the roots, I think it will be all right."

"You are successful at growing lilies, Mr. Morris."

"I have been growing lilies from seeds most of my life. Do you know, it is more fun than anything else trying to cross lilies and get new forms and colors?"

"I hope you don't dig up too many bulbs, Mr. Morris."

"Of course I do not. I'm helping to save the forest flowers. There are plenty of city people who like to buy lily bulbs. That is why I raise them from seed. Once, I saw a woman putting stakes near every fawn lily that bloomed on a hillside. I knew she intended to come back in the fall when the flowers and the leaves were gone. She thought she would dig down by her stake and get a nice fat lily bulb."

"That would have been pretty bad," said John. "How could you prevent her doing it?"

The old man laughed softly. His bright eyes twinkled as he answered : "That was easy. After the woman left I pulled

out the stakes and reset them where no lilies were growing. Considering the lilies is my work in life, young man."

"You are not much like most people around," said John. "Most everybody tears flowers up by the roots or cuts down the trees."

"Tearing up and cutting down is bad business, son. It has to be done carefully. Now, think how greedy it is to strip bark from a tree and let the tree die. There's hardly a tan oak left in the forests and the cascara is all being stripped. Greed is a monster."

John became more and more interested in the old man of the forest who continued :

"Yes, sir, greed is a monster, selfish as a cat and vain as a peacock. I call the old monster a Peacock Cat."

"That is a funny name," said John. "I never saw a Peacock Cat. What does he look like?"

"Upon my word, son, he looks soft and furry and feathery. He really looks quite beautiful when he spreads his tail feathers. When the cat part of him purrs, people say, 'How comfortable he is !' But just you watch that Peacock Cat when he goes hunting in the dark. He is cruel and he destroys.

The little old man put his hand on the soft moss of the log he sat upon. He forgot the greedy Peacock Cat of his imagination for a moment. His thoughts returned to the beauty of the forest. He said to John :

"Why did you question where home is?"

"It is something queer inside of me that fights something else inside."

"Never you mind, son. I know all about it. You are a hybrid. You are like the lily I made. I crossed a tiger lily with a redwood lily. Something wonderful happened, something rare in color and fragrance. That is what you are, boy, something rare."

"But, Mr. Morris, your tiger lily and your redwood lily both belonged near these woods. This was home for both of them."

"Now, young man, this is my idea about home. We people on earth have just one home. It is the earth itself. It doesn't matter a bit what spot on earth a man goes to, it is home. You can't get away from it." He paused a moment, then laughed as he added, "Of course there isn't any spot like this particular one right here in California."

John laughed too. "I guess you are right in that, Mr. Morris. I'll not question it any more. Now I have to go home and put these violets in water."

"Don't forget what I said about the monster of greed, that old Peacock Cat."

"I won't. There is plenty to think about him. I shall tell Mr. Gayforth about the Peacock Cat."

John started for home. Far in the branches of a tall tree an owl hooted. Three times its dismal cry startled the boy. Then, through an opening in the greenery far above, he saw the owl fly away.

"Green forest home," sang John as he ran out of the forest, "green forest home."

CHAPTER X

HELEN'S SECRET



BY THE TIME the branches of the maples were hung with creamy tassels of flowers Florence felt nearly well. Helen visited her in the attic bedroom. They studied their lessons together as they sat side by side in low chairs, in front of the brick fireplace with its blazing alder logs. Their feet rested on a braided rug where Pee-wee's basket stood unoccupied.

The little coon busied himself running around the room, sniffing for food. His bright eyes sparkled in the firelight as he lifted his nose toward Florence. He scented something sweet.

"Come here, Pee-wee," said Florence, "come hunt in my pocket for candy."

The coon found a small piece. He took it to a basin of water standing on the hearth and washed it well before he began to nibble it.

"Now isn't he cunning?" asked Florence. "He has a club named after him too. You must join the club, Helen. It's to

save some big redwoods for the State. I'm the vice-president of the Pee-wee Club."

"Does it have a president too?"

"Mr. Gayforth is the president. We are to call a meeting next Saturday afternoon. You must be sure to come. Bring Leora, Fanny, Mabel and everybody. We shall have a party, too, after the meeting. Leora can make her famous popovers. My mother will help."

"That part sounds good. Is Miss Luella coming?"

"Surely, she is going to help us hold the meeting the right way. We have to have something called parliamentary procedure."

Helen looked quite shy as she said: "I think I had better not come. I wouldn't know what to do. I can't do anything smart like you—writing poems or anything. I'm stupid."

"You are not stupid, Helen. You mustn't say such a thing. You come to the club meeting. All you have to do is to say "Aye" when you mean "Yes," and "No" when you mean "No." The president does all the talking. You be sure to come, Helen, and bring as many as you can. It's very important."

"All right. I'll bring some strawberry jam for Leora's popovers. May I hold Pee-wee now? I like to pet him. My mother doesn't allow any animals at our house, not even a puppy."

"Why don't you get one anyway? Your mother wouldn't mind if you just brought something home the way I did Pee-

wee. My mother even lets Edward have a bear. Have you seen him yet?"

"Edward showed him to me in the woodshed. I was sorry for the bear. He ought to be set free. If I were chained up so I couldn't prowl around the woods, I would be terribly cross."

"So would I," answered Florence. "I'm glad no one wants to chain us. Edward is waiting for Mike Farrell to come for the bear, then he will get a dollar reward."

"A dollar is a lot of money. I never had a dollar in my life."

"Well, I did, just once, when I sold some strawberries at the Inn."

"What did you do with so much money?" asked Helen.

"I bought a second-hand waffle iron for my mother. I love waffles. We have them every Sunday morning now. You should see how Pee-wee likes them with plenty of syrup."

"Well, if I had a dollar to spend I wouldn't buy a waffle iron."

Helen looked very solemn as she thought about what she would like to buy with a dollar. Finally, she said: "If I ever had a dollar all my own, I would buy some paints and a brush. I'm tired of trying to paint wild roses with beet juice."

"Why, Helen, I never knew before that you painted pictures. Why didn't you tell me?"

"I didn't say I painted pictures. I just try to make pink roses out of beet juice."

Helen's eyes shone with longing as she continued: "If ever I could paint a picture of the fog coming over the hills at sunset all pink and golden like—like—well, like fog all pink and

golden, I think I should not mind being stupid. Now I have to go home to do the chores."

Helen put Pee-wee in his basket, took her schoolbooks and walked toward the door. "Good-by, Florence. You won't tell anybody about my painting, will you? It's my secret."

"I won't tell. Sure and honest, I won't tell until you want me to. I like to have secrets with my chum."

When Saturday afternoon came, Florence felt entirely well. She was her same happy, pretty self wearing a new dress her mother had made, which flared with a gored skirt, and had lovely short sleeves.

Florence was glad to see her schoolmates again. They all came to the meeting with their hands full of wild flowers. The long season of rain had made everything grow better than ever before. Yellow violets, lavender iris, pink oxalis, white trilliums and wild-currant flowers livened the sitting room where the children met to hear about the Pee-wee Club.

Mr. Gayforth was there to tell the object of the club. "If we can start this school club here, and every child who joins works to make a fund to save the trees, other schools all over the State will want clubs. We will be able to save a grove of the old trees for a children's park."

"What's the use of that?" asked Edward. "Aren't there trees enough around?"

"There are now, but if they are all made into lumber the soil will be lost in time. It will wash down the rivers into the sea."

John looked excited as he listened. He was thinking of what he had read in the papers about the dust bowl and all the hungry farmers in the middle west. He said solemnly :

"I will earn money to save the trees and the soil."

"So will I," said Nick. "I have ten cents in my bank now."

Miss Luella listened, with great happiness showing in her face. "Children," she said, "we must help save the trees for ourselves and all the children who are to come. When the club is running in order, we can discuss how to raise what money we can to buy the Children's Grove to give to the State of California."

Every child wished to join. Edward was made secretary and treasurer of the club because he knew so much about business. A vote was taken to elect him. Everybody said, "Aye." Helen thought that it wasn't so bad, after all, going to a club meeting.

"Remember, children, we have a big job, to save the soil. The earth is only one-fourth land, you know. Plenty of it has slid into the rivers this year and gone down to the sea."

"It took old Granny Burton's house with it," said Leora. "It took her chickens too. I saw them sitting on top of a shed floating down the river."

When the meeting was over Leora made lots of popovers. Helen opened a jar of strawberry jam, and Mrs. Dayton brought a big pitcher of creamy milk for everyone to drink. Pee-wee had his share.

While they were all laughing and happy over their party, a

noisy automobile drove into the yard. Edward went out to see who had come. There was Mike Farrell, ready to take the yearling cub home.

"Come in," said Edward to the mountain man. "Come in, and meet everybody in the Pee-wee Club."

The tall man with a gray mustache and a short gray beard on his chin and cheeks said shyly :

"I'm not made to meet folks in parlors. Mebbe I'd just better get the yearling and move on."

"Oh, come on in," said Edward. "Everybody would like to hear how you caught the cub in the first place."

"First I want to see if I recognize the cub. His collar must be pretty tight by now."

"I made a new one for him," said Edward. "Come and see it."

The two went to the woodshed where the bear was chained. He was sitting down on his hind legs and using his big front paws to shove an empty pan back and forth as if he expected it to produce something more to eat. When he looked up and saw Mike Farrell he grunted and rose on all fours. Mike went close enough so the bear could smell his boots and overalls.

"Hello, you bear. Do you recognize your old friend? I brought you a comb of honey. Mother sent it down."

The bear eagerly licked the honey from his paw with which he had crushed the comb.

"That's our bear all right. I'm mighty glad to get him back. Guess I'd better be hitting the road with him."

"Oh, come in first and tell us how you found him."

The mountaineer was greeted gladly by all the children. He told them how he had been hunting the summer before up in the sheep country beyond Bridgeville. He came across two bear cubs and took them to his ranch house.

"They were husky little rascals," he said. "One of them ran away to the woods pretty soon. His brother got used to running around the yard but after a while we had to tie him up so he wouldn't bother Mother in the kitchen. He liked her cooking pretty well, specially the smell of bacon seemed to make him hungrier than ever."

"It's queer," said Edward, "that a wild animal should like cooked food."

"Nothing queer about it, boy, if you knew Mother's cooking. It's good enough to tame the wildest. It got me in the halter all right."

The gray-haired man looked restless, sitting on a chair in the parlor.

"I'll have to be getting back to camp," he said. "The road is none too good. Slides of mud are everywhere."

Leora passed some popovers to him. "I made them," she said. "Please have one."

"My, it's lighter than a feather. How did you get the hole inside, little girl? Mother's biscuits would make ten of this one."

Mike Farrell ate the popover out of politeness. Then he rose from the chair, saying something about eating and running. He went out with Edward to get his bear.

"Here's your dollar, boy," he said. "I hope you haven't

spoiled the yearling's appetite for dumplings and stew. We surely couldn't afford to keep him on such fluff-duffle as popovers."

Edward returned to the house. He put his dollar, a big silver one, in a tin box in his room. I'll be getting that bicycle soon, he thought. Just as soon as April comes I'll be off to the woods for cascara. Edward had heard that it was bringing seven cents a pound at the druggist's in town.

CHAPTER XI

A WREATH



AFTER THE LONG spell of rain, when the sun shone again, everybody kept busy trying to clear up the damage done by the downpour. Workmen repaired the railroad, where trestles had been washed out and tunnels caved in. The highway had to be made over in many places. One day Edward stood watching a big bulldozer shoving boulders off of the road into the river. The power of the machine thrilled the boy.

"That's the way to get things done," he said to the driver of the bulldozer. "When a man uses just a pick and shovel it takes too long. That's what we are doing on our road at home. If we had one of those giants working we would soon have a highway ourselves."

"Only State roads can have such a luxury as this pet of mine," answered the driver of the big machine. "It takes plenty of taxes to pay for road upkeep."

"My father pays taxes," said Edward. "We ought to have that machine at home."

While he watched the big rocks crash down the bank to the river, a trainload of logs from the woods came on the railroad, ready to be dumped into the mill pond.

On the end car one log only could be carried, it was such a big one. When the train stopped Edward climbed up on the car to see how high he could reach on the width of the log.

"It's a beauty," he said to one of the lumberjacks standing near.

"Oh, it's not so much, only about eight feet through. Up in the woods there are some really good ones twice as big as this. You know a whole house could be made out of the boards from one of those trees."

"I have heard that before," answered Edward. "I have heard about the church in Santa Rosa that seats three hundred people. It was built from the lumber of one big tree way back in 1873."

"I never thought much about these trees, having lived among them all my life," said the lumberjack, "but, lately, everybody I meet seems to be talking about saving them. Even the movie people are around here getting ready to take pictures of the lumbering business."

"Did you ever hear of the Pee-wee Club?" asked Edward. "My sister is vice-president of it. If ever you meet Florence you will hear more about redwoods than you have heard yet. She is going to raise enough money to buy a grove."

"What will she do with it, then?"

"It's for a State playground for children. Florence likes



When the train stopped Edward climbed up on the car to see how high he could reach on the log.

trees growing better than she likes them cut into grape stakes and railroad ties. When Florence wants anything she gets it."

"Well, she's welcome to a few trees to picnic under. If all the sawmills in the United States got busy cutting redwoods, it would take fifty years for them to make the redwoods around here into lumber. Tell Florence not to worry too much about the trees being cut."

"I'll tell her, but I know what she will say. She thinks fifty years is nothing to the thousands of years it took the trees to grow. I'll tell her though. I'm on my way home now. Father's clearing some of our land so he can run sheep this summer. I have to help him today because there's no school during the Easter holidays."

"This is good weather for a holiday," said the lumberjack. "I wouldn't mind having one myself."

When Edward reached home he found Florence and John in the yard, weeding the strawberry patch. Pee-wee was running up and down the rows looking for berries. There were only a few green ones. The big white blossoms gave promise of a good crop later.

John was telling Florence about meeting Mr. Morris in the woods. "He has all kinds of wild lilies in his garden, fawn lilies, tiger lilies, firecrackers, golden lanterns, mission bells, fairy bells, trilliums and harvest brodiaeas. Mr. Morris hates people who destroy plants. He told me about the queerest animal he calls the Peacock Cat. He made it up, of course, but he says it stands for greed."

Florence stopped weeding and said to Edward : "Listen to what John is telling me. It sounds exciting. It is about a Peacock Cat."

"It sounds silly to me. Who ever saw a Peacock Cat?"

"Maybe nobody ever saw one," said John, "but Mr. Morris told me about him. He is a selfish beast who cut all the trees in the country where he lived, and let the rain wash the soil into the ocean."

"It wasn't any Peacock Cat who did that," said Edward. "It was just men who sold lumber and tanbark."

"I suppose that is what Mr. Morris means, but he says greed is a monster."

"That's too much for me," answered Edward. "I'm going up to help with the brush. Father is cutting lots of the cascara. I'm going to strip the bark. At seven cents a pound I ought to sell enough to buy my bicycle."

"Don't strip the standing bushes," asked Florence. "Promise me you will only take the bark from the ones father has to cut."

"All right, I won't be a Peacock Cat."

When Florence and John were tired of weeding they started for the stump playhouse to eat their lunch. They left Pee-wee tied in the woodshed.

All along the trail under the redwoods pink oxalis flowers bloomed amid a mass of green leaves. They were the color of Florence's gingham dress. She picked numbers of the pretty blossoms as she walked through the woods.

"I'm going to make a chain of them after we eat our lunch," she said to John.

"The stems are too tender. You can't make a chain the way you make daisy chains."

"I will find a way, you watch."

When they reached the playhouse Florence spread the lunch on a toy table that Edward had made for her.

"Fill this bottle with water from the spring, John, so we can wash the bread crumbs down. My, but I'm hungry! Ever since I had the measles I can't get enough to eat."

When John returned with the water he poured some in two cups and sat down to eat. "I am hungry too," he said. "Your mother makes the best bread in the world."

"Your mother makes the best poultices for coughs. She told me she gathers leaves of the wild-pea vine to make them. She can tell very good stories too. Will you have another sandwich?"

John helped himself and went on eating while Florence talked.

"Your mother told me a story about Robin Redbreast. It was a sad story about his eating all the madrone berries and leaving the trees bare. It was sad but I liked it. She said the girl who liked Robin cried when he went away."

John took a drink of water, put the cup down on the table, and said:

"That was a good lunch. Did my mother tell you all of that story about Robin Redbreast? She used to tell it to me when I was little. She would cry when she told me the story. That was after my father was killed. I think she cried because she was lonely. My father was a wonderful man."

Florence began tying the pink oxalis flowers together with some thread she kept in her playhouse. She held one under John's chin the way children hold buttercups to see if they like butter. The little girl said :

"The pink flower shows that you like strawberry jam. You like it very much. I can tell that."

"Everyone likes strawberry jam."

Florence went on with her wreath-making. "Tell me more about your father. Wasn't he a sailor?"

"Not exactly. He was crazy about the sea. He went everywhere on a ship after he finished school in England. He came to America on a boat that was wrecked on the rocks near Cape Mendocino. He had to swim to shore. The fog was so thick he could not see the land. He just swam the way the breakers were going. When he found the beach down there where a little stream flows into the sea, he was nearly dead with cold. He lay on the black sand and shivered."

John paused in his story. He shivered a little as if he, too, were cold. Florence looked up from her pink flowers. "Tell me more, John, tell me more."

"My mother told me how she found the shipwrecked sailor when she was gathering mussels from the rocks at low tide. She wasn't afraid. She was sorry and kind. She took the stranger up the canyon where her father and mother lived near a hazel-bush clearing. They made him warm and dry by the fire and gave him food to eat.

"My father said afterward that in all his travels around the world he had never seen such a beautiful place and such kind

people. That is why he stayed and married my mother. That is why he sent to England for his books and pictures and rugs. My mother said he told her once that he had been everywhere in the world and right here on a beach in California, where he was wrecked in the fog, he found his Heart's Desire. Those are the words he used—Heart's Desire. That is what he called the canyon home where he lived with my mother's people."

"That story is as good as *Robinson Crusoe*," said Florence.

"There is a lot more to it. My father used to tell my mother about the mansion he lived in way back in England. It had many rooms and servants."

"Like the mansion where Robin Redbreast lived?" asked Florence.

"Maybe, only there were many people there, beautiful ladies who danced and wore silk dresses. My mother has one of the dresses that my aunt in England sent to her. She has many treasures hidden in a trunk in her bedroom. There are letters, and papers with much writing and big seals pasted on them. They look important."

"Why, John, that's a real treasure chest. It's a wonderful secret. Maybe you are a prince in disguise."

Florence became so excited she dropped the wreath on the ground. John leaned over to pick it up for her. "No, I am no prince," he said, "I am just a plain boy who milks a cow. Mr. Morris said I was a hybrid, whatever that is."

Florence laughed. "Mr. Morris must be a funny man, what with Peacock Cats and hybrids to talk about. I like to hear

your kind of story best. Are you ever going away to England to visit the big mansion where beautiful princesses dance in gowns made of silk?"

"I do not want to do that," said the boy.

"But you will, John, and then you will not have to milk the cow any more. But later you can come back to the woods. Your mother will be so happy, just as happy as when your father found Heart's Desire."

By this time Florence's cheeks were as pink as her dress, she was so excited over what she was sure would come true.

"John," she asked shyly, "when you come home again to our woods, would you please bring me one of the silk dresses? I should like it to have orange-colored spangles like madrone berries."

John seemed almost as much excited as Florence was. He said :

"I will surely do it. You stay here in the woods till I get back." The boy's face flushed and his brown eyes glowed as he said : "You know what else I could do?"

"What?"

"I could buy the redwood grove with some of the money. Now I don't mind if I am a prince—but Florence—"

"What's the matter, John? You are not smiling."

"What if I am not a prince after all? What if I am only an Indian?"

Florence stood up. She stamped her foot on the ground, and said sternly :

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself, John Clifford, for say-

ing such a thing. Wasn't your mother's grandfather Chief of his tribe?"

"He was."

"Wasn't your mother's father related to Abraham Lincoln?"

"He was."

"Then you are doubly royal."

Florence stepped outside the playhouse and picked a long stem of five-finger fern. John watched her, wondering what she would do next. She came close to him. A bit of sunlight brightened her yellow curls. Light shone in her blue eyes as she waved the fern frond over John's head. She said solemnly :

"Prince of the Forest, wear this crown I place upon your head."

Before John knew what was happening Florence placed the wreath of pink oxalis on his blue-black hair. He watched the happy smile that came over her face. He heard her laugh. Then he saw her turn and go skipping through the woods still waving the fern frond in her hand. He heard her sing :

*Fly away to fairyland
Wave the fern frond in your hand.
Say hello to moss and trees,
Say hello to birds and bees.
Say hello to little coon.
Little furry, gray raccoon.*

John ran too, leaping over the mossy logs, weaving his way in and out among bunches of sword ferns and tall, white trilliums.

No matter how fast he ran he could not catch up with Florence. She was out of the woods running toward home. John saw just a flash of pink and gold in the spring sunshine, then a door opened and closed. Florence was inside her mother's house.

CHAPTER XII

PRINCE OF THE FOREST



WHEN JOHN went home he found his mother in her flower garden picking a bouquet of double lavender violets and blue primroses. The rows of plants surrounded a bed shaded by camellia bushes and English holly. The camellias were a mass of bloom, some pink, some red. Late as the season was, holly berries still brightened the dark green foliage of the trees. Left over from the Christmas season, the berries had not as yet been eaten by wild pigeons.

As John's mother rose from the ground, her hands full of violets and primroses, she saw her son standing near with a wreath of pink oxalis on his head. His cheeks were flushed with deep color, his eyes were shining. The mother marveled at his beauty, but she said no word. She waited for him to speak. She heard him say :

"Mother, I must read the letters you keep in the trunk."

"Why must you read those letters? They were written to your father many years ago."

"I must know about things in England. I may have to go away."

A frightened look came into the mother's eyes. "Oh, no, no," she said, "you must not leave me. I should be all alone."

"Mother, I do not wish to go away. Let me read the letters. Maybe I shall not have to."

The quiet woman walked toward the house. Her black hair, so smooth against her brown cheeks, shone like satin in the afternoon light. Her long slim hands held the blue and lavender flowers close to her as she entered the house.

John followed. He had forgotten the wreath on his head. When he happened to see his image in the mirror over the fireplace, he snatched the pink crown off, saying in an embarrassed way :

"It is silly for a boy to be wearing flowers in his hair. Florence must have been making fun of me. She put them on and called me 'Prince of the Forest.'"

"You know that Florence was not making fun of you. She is a sweet little girl who believes what she says."

"Does she believe that I am anything more than a farm boy?"

"She does and so do I, John. You must believe it, too."

"Then let me see the letters in my father's trunk."

John's mother put the flowers in a bowl of water. Then she went to a bureau drawer and found the key to the trunk. When she opened the lid a musty smell came out. The top tray of the trunk was divided into three parts, a long narrow place at the back made for parasols, a wider place for hats and

the third for odds and ends. The trunk was lined with tan-colored paper dotted with tiny rosebuds.

"Do you want to see everything in the trunk, John?"

"Not now, Mother. I am anxious to read the letters."

John's mother lifted a black lace shawl from the tray and laid it on a chair. Then she placed some gray satin slippers beside the shawl. She opened a small box. In it rested a pair of long earrings. An embroidered flannel petticoat came next. "That was yours, John, when you were a baby. Aunt Abigail made it for you and sent it from England."

"What does that pattern mean that is worked on the flannel?" asked John.

"I do not know for sure. It is the same as the design on the letter paper."

"It must be a coat of arms. It is, Mother. It belongs to my father's family. There is an eagle flying over the water. Now let me see all of the letters."

John spent the rest of the afternoon studying the letters. Most of them told of what had been happening in the old home in England, all of them begged John's father to come back, and one told of the death of John's grandfather. With this letter were legal papers allowing a yearly income from the estate. John showed those papers to his mother.

"Have we received this money every year since my father died?"

"No, John, we have not. When I wrote about your father's death, I received a letter asking me to bring you to England.

I could not go, John. I could not leave this home that your father had made for me. I had to care for his garden."

"You were right, Mother, to stay here. Neither you nor I could be happy away from this land of our people."

The mother smiled a little. She knew that her boy would not ask her to go to a strange country. She asked :

"You will stay here, too, John?"

"No. I shall go to England to get the money that belongs to us. I shall talk to Mr. Gayforth. He will tell me what to do."

With a sad look on her sweet face the mother said : "What will be, will be. The nestling flies to other trees. The mother bird must live alone."

John looked at his mother whom he loved and understood. He said : "I will be back, Mother, back with you and your trees. I told Florence I should not mind being the Prince of the Forest if I could find the money to save our woods. Now I must tend to the milking."

Up the trail to the barnyard ran the Prince of the Forest. The Jersey cow awaited him. Late sunshine filtered through the big maple leaves where the first thrush of the year sang his evening song.

Apple blossoms starred the lichen-covered branches of ancient Bellflower trees in the orchard. The stream ran cleared of mud. A trout jumped from its ripples and back again, leaving a little swirl on the surface.

John whistled a merry tune as he went on his way. He was greeted by the cow with a "Moo, moo."

"Flip, flap," sounded the trout. The thrush whistled his

sweet notes that no human words could imitate. The sound filled the evening air with music which told of the loveliest things in all the world—told of speckled eggs warm under soft feathers, told of salmon berries ripening on the hillsides, told of deer ferns drooping over moist banks dotted with yellow mimulus, told how blue were Florence's eyes, how yellow her curls and told of the soft voice of John's mother. The boy stood still, listening, then he called: "You are Prince of the Forest, Mr. Thrush. You are the true singing Prince of the Forest."

CHAPTER XIII

FARTHEST WEST



THE MORE Florence thought about the story of Heart's Desire, the more she wanted to see the place where John's father had been so content to live. She knew that the small river which ran past the hazel patch to the ocean was not very far from Cape Mendocino where the lighthouse stood on a high bluff.

One morning Miss Luella was teaching the geography and history lesson for the fifth grade. The subject dealt with the California coast, its discovery and settlement.

"When Cabrillo sailed north on the Pacific, past the coast of Mexico, he kept right on until he discovered California. He was the first white man to see this land of ours. He is supposed to have discovered Cape Mendocino. In what year was that, Edward?"

"In 1542."

"And for whom was the Cape named?"

"Antonio de Mendoza, Viceroy of Mexico."

Helen raised her hand. She wished to ask a question.

"Miss Luella, why wasn't Cape Mendocino named Cape Humboldt? It is in Humboldt County, not in Mendocino."

"You tell the class about that, Edward."

The boy rose from his seat. He felt honored to tell what he had learned. He felt like an orator about to make a speech.

"Well, it was like this so far as I can find out. People think that Cabrillo's ships came this far north but Mr. Coy, who wrote the history of Humboldt County, says that nobody is quite sure of the latitude recorded in Cabrillo's papers. We do know that Mendoza was Viceroy of Mexico at the time Cabrillo came up the coast."

Edward looked at Helen as if he wished her to understand that in 1542 Humboldt, the Austrian explorer, was not yet born, that there was no Humboldt County. Then he said pointedly :

"Humboldt County was created May 12, 1853. It was named for Baron Alexander von Humboldt, the scientist. It was Captain Ottinger, of the ship *Laura Virginia*, who named our county."

Helen though *she* would have named it Mendocino County after the Cape. Then people wouldn't always be asking why Cape Mendocino was not in Mendocino County which is south of Humboldt. Helen mumbled to herself that she thought there had been a lot of stupid people besides herself.

"Anyway," continued Edward, "what has always been considered the most westerly land of the United States, with the sole exception of Cape Flattery, is now found to be one mile and a half further in than Cape Blanco in Oregon. Anyway Cape

Mendocino goes farther west into the Pacific Ocean than any place in California."

Florence thought as she listened: It is nearer China than than any place in the state.

Miss Luella continued with the lesson. She told the children about the Spanish galleons, about Sir Francis Drake and his pirate ship, the *Golden Hind*, and how he had claimed the land at Drake's Bay in the name of Queen Elizabeth. She told them, too, of the Russian fur hunters and their founding of Fort Ross in 1812.

"California might have been a Spanish, English, or Russian possession today if Yankee ships had not come to trade for furs, hides and tallow. There were whalers, too, here on the northern coast. Not until 1850, when gold was discovered in the mountains east of the coast, did many people come to settle around Humboldt Bay. You children know the story after that. You know about the redwood lumber, the shipbuilding and the dairy business."

Edward raised his hand. He wanted to tell what he had heard about the acquiring of grazing land for sheep.

"What is it, Edward?"

"You know all those grassy hills along the coast, where hundreds and thousands of sheep pasture?"

"Yes," said Miss Luella.

"Well, the man who owned all that land rode over it in a boat."

"How could he?"

"The boat was in a wagon. The land was deeded as tide land."

"You do tell the strangest tales, Edward."

"Everything I tell is true. I like to hunt for facts. There are plenty of facts in the County Recorder's office. There are lots of good pirate stories that happened on the land."

"Well, children, the lesson is over for today. Next time we can learn more about the land pirates."

After school Florence went to see John's mother. She found her working on the hooked rug in the living room.

"How is my little patient?" asked the sweet-voiced woman, as she looked up from her work.

"Perfectly well, thank you, but I am thinking all of the time about something nice, something I want you to show me."

"What can it be, I wonder?"

"It is about the beach down near the Cape, the beach where mussels are. I want to see the place where you used to live with your father and mother."

John's mother looked very solemn. She had never taken any one but her boy to see Heart's Desire. "Why do you wish to see where I used to live?"

"Because I know it must be the nicest place in the world."

"It is, Florence. We shall go some day when I can get two horses. You can ride Peggy. John will have to find someone to milk the cow while we are away."

"Edward would, I am sure."

It was about ten days later that the week-end party was ar-

ranged. The sun shone on the green hills as John, his mother and Florence rode cross-country toward the beach. It was a long ride. At noon the three happy people stopped for their picnic lunch on the side of a grassy hill, gay with yellow poppies, pink mallow flowers and soft, lavender pussy-ears.

In the distance, mountain after mountain stood purple against the sky. Their deep forests of redwood encircled occasional prairies of grass.

Over the nearer hills, flocks of sheep grazed as they roamed. The redwoods were scarce in this district. In places fallen fir logs told of fires purposely lighted in the past to clear the land for sheep grazing.

John's mother said: "When I was a little girl the sheepmen burned the trees every three years to keep the forest back. Sometimes the fire escaped. It damaged the redwood groves in places."

"I don't like sheep," said Florence. "They eat all the shrubs and grass and flowers. They spoil the country."

"They do if too many run over the hills. They invite coyotes too. Before sheep grazed on this range there were no coyotes. Now they howl and prowl in the night, looking for lambs to devour."

"Bears get the sheep too," said John.

"Are there any where we are going?" asked Florence.

"None at all. They were gone from our place before I was born."

After lunch the three rode on. They reached the beach when the sun shone in the western sky. The big sugar-loaf

rock off Cape Mendocino loomed dark against a sparkling sea. Gulls wheeled in the sky. Sea lions barked from a sun-favored ledge of the rock, adding their noise to the surf and the squawking of the gulls.

"It is a wild place, this Farthest West," said Florence as she stood by her friends.

"As wild as wind and waves and reefs can make it," answered John. "Do you see that cave in the rock? At low tide it can be reached by walking over the reef. It is about a quarter of a mile from here."

"What is in the cave?" asked Florence.

"Nothing now, but not so long ago two men camped in that cave. They slept there and cooked sea-gull eggs which they found high up in the rocks. They were there to gather sea-lion whiskers."

"Sea-lion whiskers! What were they used for?"

"The hunters sent them to China along with the gall bladders of the sea lions they killed. The Chinese use sea-lion whiskers for toothpicks. They make some kind of powerful medicine out of the gall bladders."

"I never heard of so many queer things as have happened around here. Why did the hunters leave the cave in the rock?"

"The government sent them away. The rock belongs to the lighthouse reservation. Look, Florence, way out in the ocean you can see the lightship which warns of the rocks on Blunt's Reef. It is four miles from shore."

"Does it stay there all the time? It must be terribly lonely."

"It surely must be lonely out there in the ocean, very lonely,

but that lightship has saved many lives. It has a fog horn too."

"This is a wild place," repeated Florence.

"I like it," answered John as he walked to a pool left by the tides. He picked up a sea urchin to show to Florence.

"What a funny animal. It looks like a hedgehog only it is a pretty red color."

While the children played about the sea gardens on the beach, John's mother walked alone till she came to a group of rocks covered with black kelp. She stood there looking out at sea.

"She is thinking of my father," said John. "It was there that she found him so long ago. Come, Florence, let us get the horses and tell my mother to ride up the canyon."

"To Heart's Desire?"

"Yes, to Heart's Desire."

As the three rode from the beach toward the hills they followed the small stream which wound its way among willows and alders. The trail was narrow. John went first, followed by his mother. In the rear Florence rode Peggy. She lingered a little behind the others, looking at every flower that bloomed. She liked the long gray moss which hung from the fir trees. She said to herself: "It is just like the beards of old, old men."

A cottontail rabbit scurried across the trail to hide in a tangle of blackberry vines. The trail led to the stream. The horses forded it. The fir forest gave way to a hazel patch where for centuries Indian women, now gone forever, once gathered and peeled shoots of hazel to weave into baskets.

Beyond the hazel patch a clump of gray-limbed buckeyes



"It is a wild place, this Farthest West."

stood, tipped with leaf buds. Bluebirds and yellow finches darted about.

"We must be near Heart's Desire," thought Florence, "it is so pretty here."

At the next turn she held her breath for wonder. There stood a brown wooden house with a gabled roof. It was made of lumber which carpenters call two-by-fours, set close together and battened with narrow strips of wood. Over the porch of the house wild cucumber vines climbed and bloomed with clusters of little green-white stars.

They dismounted. John took his mother's horse and tied it under a maple tree. He fastened Peggy and his own mount. Florence was already on the porch looking at a swallow's nest of mud built on the ceiling right above the door. Directly under the mud nest somebody had built a little platform to catch the droppings of the birds. Florence said to John's mother :

"Anywhere else but here the nest would be torn down as a nuisance."

"This is Heart's Desire, Florence. The mother swallow is its guardian. Now shall we enter?"

The woman knocked on the door before entering. Florence wondered why. When she stepped into the dimly lighted room she felt a soft rug under her feet. She was conscious that the floor was strewn with deep-toned Oriental rugs. As her eyes grew used to the dimness she noticed a strange figure holding the hand of John's mother. He was a very tall, straight

man with gray hair. He wore a long dressing gown of maroon silk, padded and quilted like a comforter. On his head was a Chinese straw hat with a tall peaked crown and wide brim. He looked for all the world like a figure out of a Chinese painting. As he moved near Florence and took her hand in greeting, she noticed that his eyes were very blue. They were bright, laughing eyes, speaking eyes, which seemed to look deep into Florence's mind.

"This is Uncle Darius, Florence. Now I must go in the kitchen."

"How do you do, sir," said the little girl, bowing low as she thought one should when meeting so honorable a personage.

"We are glad you have come. Won't you be seated by the fire? It is rather chilly."

Florence sat down on a very soft sofa, a red-plush one. All around her were beautiful things.

On the walls high up near the ceiling, mounted specimens of large fish seemed to be swimming around the room. All the noses of the fish pointed one way. They were going clockwise around the room, very large tunas, yellowtails, swordfishes and one muskellunge.

While Florence looked at the big fishes another old man came up to greet her. He was so thin and his cheeks so pale that Florence felt sorry for him. He smiled and said:

"Welcome, little girl, welcome. Will you have a peppermint? I am Uncle Thaddeus."

"Thank you very much, Uncle Thaddeus. I like pepper-

mints. Would you mind telling me whose uncle you are?"

"Not in the least, but first you must meet Aunt Abigail. I will call her."

Uncle Thaddeus disappeared into the kitchen. While he was gone Florence noticed that a long board table was set in the room. Florence counted the plates. There were six of them placed on woven basket doilies. "One for John, one for his mother, one for me, that makes three ; one for Uncle Darius, one for Uncle Thaddeus, that makes five, surely the sixth is for Aunt Abigail."

Just then Uncle Darius came back leading a sweet old lady by the hand. She had white hair and a lace shawl over her head and shoulders. She, too, was smiling as she took Florence's hand and said : "I am Aunt Abigail, dear. It is so nice you could come and visit us."

"I am most happy to be here. Would you mind telling me whose aunt you are?"

"Not in the least, my child. Let us all sit down at the table. The duck pie is done I am sure."

They all sat down on long benches. Uncle Darius had removed his hat. They waited for John and his mother to come from the kitchen. John came first, bringing a very large Mexican bowl which held the duck pie. His mother carried a Chinese dish full of mushrooms floating in gravy. When they were seated Aunt Abigail asked Uncle Thaddeus to say the blessing.

Then everybody began to eat hot rolls and jelly, string beans

and mushrooms, duck pie and rice. John sat next to Florence. He seemed as much surprised as she to see the three nice old people.

"Would you mind telling me," he asked, "whose relatives you are? Of course I am most pleased to meet you. You are perfectly welcome."

The two uncles looked at John as if they had never seen anyone who interested them so much. Uncle Thaddeus said: "You look like your father, John, the same straight back, the same smile"—"And the same voice," added Aunt Abigail. "I should know at once you were your father's son."

"Did you know my father?" asked John in great surprise.

"Did we know him? We used to toddle him on our knees," said Aunt Abigail.

John's mother helped everybody to more duck pie. Then she told John just what had happened.

"These dear people are from England. They are your father's uncles and aunt. They came here a week ago."

"Did you know they were here, Mother?"

"Yes, soon after you asked to see the letters in my trunk, I received another letter saying they were coming. The stage driver brought them to this house and the light-keeper's wife made them comfortable. I did not tell you because, because—"

"Because what?" asked the astonished John.

"Because I wanted you and Florence to think you were to see Heart's Desire, as I had told you about it."

"It is even more wonderful," said Florence, "with these nice people in it."

"It is truly, and do you know, children, the most wonderful thing of all is that John may not have to go to England. His relatives have come to us to attend to everything."

The mother looked happier than she had for many years. Florence was so excited she ran around the table and kissed the two old uncles and the sweet, white-haired aunt. Then she said :

"I am sure you will like it here, out west, out farthest west. We have flowers and ferns, sea-lion whiskers, moss and everything."

"And very good duck pie," added Aunt Abigail.

CHAPTER XIV

A SURPRISE FOR JOHN



UPPER WAS finished. Lamplight shed its cheer throughout the room. Florence looked about her at all the unusual objects. She noticed a ship's bell of brass. The light rested on the brass ring of a porthole which seemed to be a window in one wall. Florence was not sure about it. Her mind was bubbling over with unasked questions. Every strange object in the cosy room suggested a question. What was that noise she heard coming from the kitchen? Somebody must be washing the dishes and humming while he did it. Who could be in the kitchen? Where did wild ducks for a pie come from this time of the year? Who made the pie? Again Florence looked at the big fish going sunwise around the frieze. She said to John's mother :

"I do not wish to be impolite, but could you tell me about the big fishes on the wall? Who brought them here?"

"Those fish were caught by my father. Sit down here on this footstool and I will tell you whatever you want to know."

"We also wish to hear the tale," said Aunt Abigail who sat between the two old uncles on the red-plush sofa.

Florence settled herself on the footstool close to the fire, which snapped and crackled as if it, too, were excited and impatient to hear the story. John rested on the arm of his mother's chair. His arm was about her shoulders as she leaned back in its comfortable depths and smiled at all of her guests.

"It is a long story," she said. "Let us start with the fish. My father was a hunter and a fisherman born in the middle west. He traveled much before he settled here near the western sea. He homesteaded this land in the early days. There were a few of my mother's people living here at that time. They taught my father how to fish as they fished, how to net the salmon in the spring run, how to catch the steelheads at the mouth of the big river. That muskellunge my father caught in Lake Michigan before he came to California. After he built this house he had his mounted fish sent to him by boat. They came all the way around the Horn and were landed at Humboldt Bay. The packing boxes were large ; getting them out here by land would have cost more, I am sure, than it did to bring them all the way by sea."

Aunt Abigail was greatly interested. She said solemnly : "The sportsman who was John's grandfather must have been even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord."

Florence had never heard of Nimrod. She would be able to remember his name because it reminded her of fish rod. She found herself saying aloud :

*"Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord,
Caught a fish both long and broad.
Caught a fish before the Lord did—"*

"What is that? What is that?" interrupted Aunt Abigail. "Caught a fish before the Lord did?"

Uncle Darius and Uncle Thaddeus laughed very hard. The little wrinkles about Aunt Abigail's eyes told of puzzled amusement.

John noticed the expression on her face. "You mustn't mind Florence," he said. "She always makes up poetry about everything. That is how she remembers things like 'Thirty days hath September, April, June and November.'"

"Oh, I see. It is a very good way too," said Aunt Abigail as she straightened the folds of her white lace shawl. She seemed puzzled again. "But why does Florence have to try to remember Nimrod? I thought all children knew about the mighty hunter."

"Maybe they do in England," answered Florence, "but here in America we only know about trappers and hunters like Kit Carson and John's grandfather. You see his grandfather was related to Abraham Lincoln."

"Oh, I see," said the little lady. "Oh, I see. I have heard of Abraham Lincoln. Was it not he who freed the Blacks or was that George Washington? Now, my dear, may we hear more about John's grandfather and this house that he built?"

John's mother continued the story: "In the days before the lightship was anchored off this coast, many ships were wrecked

on Blunt's Reef. Most of them were lost in the fog. The light on the Cape did not reach through the mist. There were boats carrying lumber from Seattle to San Francisco, ships carrying passengers too. Always after a wreck the tide washed things ashore. My father gathered from the beach all the two-by-fours with which this house is built. Even the red-plush sofa and the armchair were cast ashore one time."

"Most extraordinary, I am sure," said Aunt Abigail. "Do you mean that this sofa I am sitting upon once floated on the waters of the sea? It must have been difficult to dry it out."

She moved her delicate hands cautiously over the surface of the red plush as if to make certain that the drying of the sofa was complete. Reassured, she continued:

"It is quite all right, very comfortable indeed. Think of it, this sofa might once have been occupied by a mermaid."

"It is a poetic possibility," said Uncle Thaddeus. Immediately he burst into rhyme himself, astonishing his listeners with the words:

*A mermaid lay without a blush
Upon a sea-soaked couch of plush.
She watched the breakers rush and gush
About her sofa made of plush.*

"Hush, hush, now do hush," Aunt Abigail laughed, "or I shall blush upon the plush." She bounced up and down in great glee on the red-plush sofa. "The springs are really excellent," she said.

By this time all six people were laughing and having such a

good time that shipwrecked mariners and scattered cargoes were forgotten. Only the peace of a snug harbor filled their hearts.

John stirred the fire and put on another log. Then he left the room, saying: "I must bed down the horses. Shall I put them in the old barn, Mother?"

"That will be best, I think. Have you watered and fed them yet?"

"I did that before supper. My, but they were glad to have those oats."

Aunt Abigail listened for the door to close, then she turned wonderingly toward John's mother. She asked simply:

"Does not the stableboy groom the horses, my dear? That is hardly the right occupation for my nephew's son."

"We have no stableboy, Aunt Abigail."

"We must get one immediately. Darius, consult with Thaddeus about a stableboy."

"How do you think Ah Soong would do?" asked Uncle Thaddeus.

"Ah Soong? We brought him from San Francisco to do the cooking. He makes excellent wild-duck pie but I doubt if the horses would care for that. No, Ah Soong must remain in the kitchen."

John's mother looked helpless. Florence became much excited. She said impulsively, "Did you say Ah Soong, Aunt Abigail? Is he a Chinaman?"

"That is what I was told in San Francisco."

"It is hard to believe. No Chinaman would come to Humboldt County if he knew where he was. He would be afraid to."

"How extraordinary! What is the particular reason for that?"

"Many years ago," answered John's mother, "the Chinese were driven violently from this county and told never to set foot in it again. There had been local trouble when one white man was accidentally killed. That was in the days of labor agitation throughout the State. The slogan of the agitators was 'The Chinese must go.' My father told me about the trouble in San Francisco. The people in Humboldt County felt justified, I suppose."

"Most extraordinary. Why should Chinese go any more than Swedes, or Nova Scotians or English?"

"Probably for the same reason that the native Indians were exterminated," said John's mother with a tinge of bitterness in her voice.

"It is more than I can understand," said Aunt Abigail, "but surely Ah Soong will not be asked to leave when he can cook so well. He is most helpful."

Florence said mysteriously: "Do not tell Ah Soong that he is in Humboldt County. He would leave. Every Chinaman knows the story of what happened here." The little girl spoke earnestly. "May I see Ah Soong, Aunt Abigail? I never saw a Chinaman. I like Chinese things so much, I am sure I should like Ah Soong."

"I am sure you would. He seems a cheerful sort of person.

Let us visit the kitchen. Darius, you and Thaddeus come also."

Uncle Thaddeus, who had been busy all evening folding paper into shapes of little boats and boxes, rose with his papers in his hands and followed Uncle Darius, again wearing his pagoda hat. John's mother nodded to Florence to go. All five entered the kitchen where a coal-oil lamp stood on a table near the sink. Ah Soong, surprised, said: "Wassa matter, lots of people in kitchen."

He was seated at the table, before him a washbowl of warm water into which he dipped a small saucer. He rubbed the wet edge of the porcelain dish on his forehead.

"Fixem headache," he said, "salt water him good medicine."

Florence was fascinated as she watched the long, slender fingers of Ah Soong. In spite of his headache, a cheerful smile spread over the cook's round face. His eyes gleamed with good humor. He rose from his chair and walked toward the cook stove, his sandaled feet slapping upon the floor. Florence noticed what nice white clothes he wore, not a spot on jacket or trousers. Ah Soong lifted the stove lid to attend to the fire. The light from the fire rested on his broad nose and high cheek bones. Florence thought the face was like that of the chubby Chinese Buddha who never ceased to smile from the mantelpiece in the living room at home.

John came into the kitchen, having attended to the horses. Aunt Abigail said: "John and Florence want to tell you how good the duck pie was, Ah Soong."

"It was so good. Where did you get the wild duck?" asked Florence.

"Find 'em in cupboard in glass jar. Find 'em mushrooms too."

John's mother looked very much pleased. She told the family that she herself had canned the mushrooms and wild duck last season.

"So that is why everything was so nice, just like the time Aladdin rubbed the lamp and a wonderful meal was on the table. I think I shall call Ah Soong Aladdin."

All this time Uncle Darius stood smiling with the Chinese hat on his head. Uncle Thaddeus kept folding papers into fancy shapes.

"Give 'em me," said Ah Soong. "I make 'em one wild duck out of paper." His long fingers folded the paper many times, twisted it, and unfolded it in places, till a bird form showed in his hands.

"Marvelous!" exclaimed Uncle Thaddeus. "That's a deuce of a clever trick."

When the paper duck was finished Ah Soong pointed to the pagoda hat on the head of Uncle Darius.

"All same coolie man in China. Where you get 'em?"

Uncle Thaddeus answered: "In Chinatown in San Francisco."

"Chinatown good place," said Ah Soong turning toward Florence. "You see Chinatown, little missee?"

"No, I never have. I should like to."

When the family returned to the living room Aunt Abigail

said: "Darius, you must find a stableboy at once. We cannot have Lord Sheridan's son grooming the horses."

"Who is Lord Sheridan's son?" asked John as he sat by Aunt Abigail on the red-plush sofa.

"You are, child. Your voice is exactly like my nephew's. You look like him too."

"You mean that my father was a lord?"

"Yes, child."

"I am glad because then I am not a prince. Florence said I was a prince in disguise. I knew that I wasn't. I am glad because I do not want to be a prince. I wouldn't be a prince or a king for anything in the world."

"Yes, you would," answered Florence. "Yes, you would. Don't you remember what we talked about that day at the stump house when I crowned you Prince of the Forest? You said you wouldn't mind being a prince if you could get money enough to buy the Children's Grove."

Everybody listened, very much interested. John stood with flushed cheeks and glowing eyes. He saw his mother smiling bravely at him. Impulsively the boy went to her. He whispered in her ear something that made her smile still more. The quiet woman was moved to speak. She said:

"John tells me he would rather be my son than be a prince or a king."

"But," added the boy out loud, "I am glad too, that I am Lord Sheridan's son. He would want me to save the forests he learned to love. He would want me to stay with Mother in the land of Heart's Desire."

CHAPTER XV

PLANNING A SCHOOL PLAY



THAT NIGHT Florence could not sleep when she first went to bed. Her mind was too full of the day's happenings. She lay on a cot in the room where John's mother slept. She wondered how her friend could be so peaceful. It must be because John had whispered nice things in her ear, she thought. John is very fond of his mother.

She recalled everything that had happened: the ride over the hills, the stop at the beach, the trip up the canyon, the swallow's nest on the porch, the fish near the ceiling, the dear old uncles and aunt. Then she remembered Ah Soong and the good duck pie. She laughed out loud when she thought of the red-plush sofa with a mermaid sitting upon it. The laugh awakened John's mother. "What is it, little one?" she asked.

"I'm just thinking what a nice time we had today. What Uncle Thaddeus said about the red-plush sofa makes me laugh. I like John's great-uncles. I like Aunt Abigail too. Ah Soong

is wonderful, isn't he? Tomorrow I shall ask him about Confucius."

"Tomorrow, yes, but now you had better try to sleep, Florence."

"That is what you said when I had the measles. You told me a nice story then about Robin Redbreast. Could you tell it again, please?"

"Oh, Florence, you surely know that story from beginning to end."

"No, I don't. Something new happens every time. The mansion has many servants and now it has two old uncles and an aunt. It has Lord Sheridan, too. I wonder if it has shining earrings that are very long. I am sure it has."

"So you are making the story to suit yourself. I see. Well, you go to sleep like a good little girl. In the morning you can tell me the story."

"All right, I will try, but I'm thinking of all that's going to happen. I shall ask John's great-uncles and aunt to join the Pee-wee Club. We are to have a meeting next week."

"Sleep now, Florence, sleep. You have talked enough."

"Please sing the song you used to sing to John when he was a baby. Please do. It will make me sleepy."

"All right, dear, but I must sing softly so as not to disturb anybody."

In the room lighted only by soft rays of the moon rising behind a clump of twisted fir trees, John's mother sang a lullaby learned from her Indian mother.

*When the fog comes drifting, drifting,
And the sea keeps lifting, lifting,
When the moon comes gliding, gliding,
And the stars in mist are hiding,
Then 'tis time to sleep, my minnow,
Time to rest, my little minnow.*

*When the fog comes drifting, drifting,
Through the redwoods sifting, sifting,
When the branches dripping, dripping,
Hide the hoot owl dipping, dipping,
Then 'tis time to sleep, my linnet,
Time to rest, my little linnet.*

The singer paused to listen. Florence did not speak. "Little linnet is asleep, dear little linnet is asleep."

In the morning, after breakfast, John and Florence went to the barn to feed the horses who were to carry them home that day. When that was done they took a short walk to a hill topped with wind-blown laurel trees. They wanted to view the ocean from the summit. As they climbed they talked of John's English relatives.

"Isn't it wonderful that they came, John?"

"I am not so sure," answered the boy who seemed more solemn than usual. "They are very nice people, but they do not fit out here in the west. Did you hear what they said about a stableboy?"

"Of course I heard. I think that is perfectly all right. You

never did like to milk the cow. Maybe, now, you will not have to, Lord Sheridan."

Florence smiled mischievously as she bowed to her friend. John noticed her pink cheeks, her yellow curls blowing in the wind. He said defiantly :

"I don't believe in that kind of fairy tale happening. Why did my father milk the cow? Why did he not hire a stableboy if he had so much money?"

"I should say because he liked to. He seemed to have money enough to give your mother lots of pretty things."

"I have been thinking about that, too, Florence. The books and pictures and rugs, the chest of Chinese silks he already owned. He did not buy them later. Besides, my mother says the remittance he received before he died was very small and we have not received it since his death."

"Oh, John, don't look so gloomy. You are Lord Sheridan. There must be a mansion of many rooms back in England that belongs to you."

"Well, it can stay back in England for all I care. This is where I belong and where my mother belongs, among the hills and trees. I do not want to go away."

In the shelter of the wind-blown laurels which looked as if their tops had been sheared with a lawn mower, they were so smooth and even, the children paused to look at the sea.

"The fog is coming in," said John. "I think we should start for home. It will be cold riding back to Pigeon Creek."

"I wish we didn't have to leave. I like it here. I like Heart's Desire so much I could stay forever."

"That is what my father said. That is what my mother's father said when he built the house. He homesteaded plenty of land around here. This is all my mother's now."

"It is funny, John, how Indians, who were here for hundreds of years, hunting and fishing and enjoying everything, had to have the land given back to them by some white person who homesteaded."

"It is queer. It doesn't make sense, Florence. The fish, the game, the trees, the nuts and berries were for everybody once upon a time ; not just for somebody in particular who said, 'This is mine.'" John paused to watch a flight of bluebirds. He said with feeling : "I want all the birds and fish and flowers to have a chance."

"So do I, John. I want every place to be as nice as Heart's Desire."

When John looked at Florence's bright blue eyes and smiling face the gloomy mood passed away from him, and together they ran back to the barn to saddle the horses for the home trip. It was a jolly ride home.

Back at school, after the week-end holiday, Florence and John found plenty to do. There was little time to think of Heart's Desire. Besides learning the daily lessons, the children were busy planning a program to be given at the end of the term.

Miss Luella had heard about Mr. Morris' monster of greed, the Peacock Cat. She wanted to put him in a play for the Pee-wee Club. She told the children about her idea. They discussed it during the hour for English.

"The Peacock Cat is the villain of the play," said the teacher. "He is a selfish beast who cut all the trees in the country where he lived, and let the rain wash the soil into the ocean. He turned his part of the earth into a desert. Nothing would grow where the Peacock Cat walked. He made slaves out of all people."

"Who is the hero of the play?" asked John.

"I know who the hero ought to be," said Florence. "The hero should be somebody who orders trees to be planted everywhere."

"That is a good idea, Florence. It is only once in a blue moon we get anyone to order that done. He would be a real hero come to save the land. Why not call our play *Once in a Blue Moon*?"

"That sounds wonderful. A blue moon, a blue moon! It makes me think of the glass fishing float that Edward found. Could we have a Blue Moon King, Miss Luella?"

"I think that would be fine. Who would take the part? How about you, John?"

"It all depends upon what he has to do. If there is any dancing I will not be the king."

"Well, the play is not written yet. Suppose you make the part to suit yourself. You think about it, John, and write it for us."

"I know nothing about kings but, if I were one, the first thing I should do would be to buy the lumber mill and forbid the cutting of the big redwoods. A Moon King would certainly know how bad a place is without trees."

There were many talks about the play before the plot was completed. Florence said the Unicorn should be the fairy in the play. After all was decided, there were parts to be played by seven of the children. Edward did not want to act. He asked if he might be stage director and mechanician for the play. He said :

“I can do that a lot better than I can act.”

When the characters were all chosen for the plot, Miss Luella told the children to write notes. “Here is the cast,” she said, “write it down :

John		King of the Blue Moon
Dick		The Peacock Cat
Fanny		The Lady
Leora		The Cook
Helen		Sprite of the Mineral Kingdom
Florence		Sprite of the Vegetable Kingdom
Mabel		Sprite of the Animal Kingdom

At the end put—Edward.....Mechanician.”

“Miss Luella, may I say something about the Unicorn?” asked Florence. “I think my pony Peggy could be the Unicorn if the Mechanician would make a horn and a cow’s tail for him and paint his hoofs silver.”

“We shall have to think about that. Of course we may need to have words spoken for the part. But for the present add to your list—Peggy—the Unicorn. Now we must have our arithmetic lesson.”

CHAPTER XVI

THE PLAY IS GIVEN



LORENCE AND HELEN were busy in the attic bedroom painting invitations for the closing exercises of school. Every invitation had a design of a redwood tree against a blue moon. Miss Luella had suggested that as well as the words: *Greetings to you*, which were lettered in ink. Helen felt very happy with good paints and brushes. She said to Florence:

"This is the first time I have had real paint. Before I could make only wild roses. I used to make the pink color out of beet juice. It is wonderful to have these paints."

"They are good paints. They stick to the paper. You ought to see the dress John's mother made for me to dance in. She had the silk in one of her chests. It came from China."

"I have a crazy dress," answered Helen. "It's all gray, streaked with black. It is supposed to look like a drought on the desert, because I am the slave of the Peacock Cat. I hate that old Peacock Cat. He calls me a dolt in the play. What is a dolt anyway?"

"The dictionary says it means a heavy, stupid fellow. Your part is a lot harder to play than mine. All I have to do is to dance around, waving a fern frond."

"But you dance wonderfully, Florence. I wish I could do half as well."

The two girls practised the steps around the room while Florence hummed the music. "All you have to do is just dance," said Florence. "Now try again. That's fine, that's really fine. You can do it."

"I would much rather paint. Let's finish the invitations. We have to mail three to John's relatives. We can give the rest by hand."

"Have we one for Mr. Morris?"

"I shall make his now, a special one because if it hadn't been for Mr. Morris no one would have thought about the monster of greed, the Peacock Cat."

When the day for the exercises came every mother in Pigeon Creek district packed sandwiches, potato salad, baked beans, pickles, cakes, cookies and pies in boxes and baskets. All were loaded in the autos along with baby brothers and sisters. There was to be a picnic after the program.

Up a narrow, winding road which followed the creek into the mountains the cars bumped and shook. Everybody laughed and joked on the way. Miss Luella and the school children had gone early in the morning to get everything ready.

Under a large maple tree the cars were parked in front of the outdoor stage where the play was to be given. Seats were removed from the cars and placed on the ground among ferns and

grass. Here summer visitors from the Inn at Pigeon Creek sat with Aunt Abigail and the two old uncles. Mrs. Reidy who kept the Inn was there talking to all her friends. When John's mother introduced her to the old people from England she smiled her very pleasant smile and immediately made them feel welcome.

Uncle Thaddeus politely offered his seat to her saying: "I can see much better if I stand in the background. I want to get as good a view as possible of that strange rock pile which suggests a throne set among the redwoods."

Miss Luella stepped out from behind a big tree, followed by the eight children. She announced:

"Our program commences with a song, *America the Beautiful*. Ready, children."

Standing in a row with John first, then Helen, because they were the eldest, the children sang the refrain which seemed to fit the scene:

*America! America!
God shed His grace on thee,
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea.*

Aunt Abigail whispered to Uncle Thaddeus who stood behind her: "These Americans surely sing of worthy sentiments of brotherhood."

Uncle Thaddeus nodded. He was thinking to himself how sweet the children's voices sounded, especially John's voice,

which was so much like his father's when he was a boy soprano at home in England.

After the song Dick spoke a welcome to the guests. While he was in the middle of it, Buster, the collie dog from the Inn, ran up wagging his tail. The children couldn't help laughing but Dick went right on with his piece.

When the welcome was finished Miss Luella and the children disappeared down a steep bank back of the trees to dress for the opening scene of the Blue Moon play. While they were there Mr. Gayforth made a little speech about the Pee-wee Club. At the end of his talk Edward the Mechanician appeared on the stage to speak the prologue. He did it in a matter-of-fact way very clearly.

"To you kind friends we introduce
The Peacock Cat, the villain of our play.
'Twas he whose greed for wealth destroyed the trees
That grew in his domain. Destroying them
Earth's soil was lost, swept to the hungry sea.
Desert became the land.

"The hero of our play, the Blue Moon King
Has come to Earth to save it from the fate
The poor dead moon has had ; the fate forlorn
Of barrenness, of rockiness, of drought.
Heroic, wise and kindly is the King
Who comes to save the land.

“His coming is foretold by Unicorn
The happy Spirit of the Universe
Who summons to the aid of Blue Moon King
Three Sprites who represent three Kingdoms fair,
Mineral, Vegetable, Animal.
They dance before the Cat.

“Now lest you wonder why our play be called
‘Once in a Blue Moon,’ we tell you, friends, that we
Ourselves are not quite sure. We leave to you
The solving of the riddle. But take this tip :
‘Is it not rare for human folk to serve
The Earth, their Mother ?’”

Edward the Mechanician bowed as everybody in the audience applauded. Then raising his hand for silence he continued :

“My friends we have no curtain, neither flies.
We pray you let the curtain of your eyes
Drop down, closed tight till curtain call.
Let curtains rise at sound of caterwaul.”

The mechanician vanished. All eyes were closed except those of Uncle Thaddeus. He wanted to see everything that happened. He watched the leafy stage all green and golden with sunlight filtering through high branches of the redwoods. On the rocky throne the sunlight shone like a spotlight. Uncle

Thaddeus saw a queer figure emerge from the shrubbery. It climbed the throne and sat down.

"The Peacock Cat," he thought. "By gad, the Peacock Cat."

Dick, of course, was inside the manufactured skin of a cat with very long whiskers. He sat on the throne and spread his peacock-feather tail each side of him. He whispered to Helen, who crouched at his feet: "Are you ready? Shall I meow?"

"All ready," she said.

Then Dick, the Peacock Cat, let forth such a meowing and caterwauling that it could be heard throughout the woods. All eyes were opened. The Blue Moon play had begun. Dick was calling loudly:

"What ho, fool? What ho?"

Miss Luella, who took the part of the Unicorn, danced through the ferns to the rocky throne. She hummed a tune so prettily that everybody listened, charmed by the sound. Her feet with silver slippers seemed not to touch the ground, so lightly she leaped. Her dress made of thin silk shimmered all blue and emerald green as she leaped to the throne of the Peacock Cat and answered his call.

"What ho, Your Majesty? Though I enter to your call of fool, methinks I am miscalled. I might come more fleetly were you to call: 'What ho, wise spirit?'"

The Peacock Cat said it was all one to him, wise spirit or fool, so long as he could be made to laugh. "I am bored to death," he said, "ruling in this Mineral Kingdom. The rocks are stony."

"The stones are rocky, true. What would you have?" asked the Unicorn.

"Summon the Sprite of the Vegetable Kingdom. Summon the Sprite of the Animal Kingdom. Bid them dance before me. And you, dolt, awake!"

The grouchy Peacock Cat spoke gruffly to Helen, the Mineral Sprite who crouched at his feet. "Awake, dolt. Cast off the heaviness from thy feet."

The audience watched with great interest as the Vegetable and Animal Sprites danced on to the stage. Florence came first, waving a fern frond in her hand.

"Howdy, you imps. Have you new tricks to rouse a soul that limps?"

Florence and the Animal Sprite sang :

"I can trick the seeds to grow.
I can make the rooster crow.
I can make the farmer sow.
I can make the cattle low."

The Peacock Cat asked : "Can you trick this dolt of mine to loose her tongue, to show some sign of life?"

Florence leaned over Helen saying :

"Courage, sister, we will clear
The weight you carry, though 'tis queer
The Peacock Cat cannot do that."

Helen answered : "The Peacock Cat sits on a mat of pebbles flat. And that is that. What can you expect? I am his slave."

"Down with all slavery !" cried Florence.

"Hail to all bravery !" said Helen.

"End to all knavery ! Hurray, hurray !"

At this outcry the Unicorn vanished down the bank followed by the three Sprites, leaving an angry Peacock Cat sitting upon a rocky throne. He mumbled to himself :

"Dolts, numskulls, impudent rabble, coveting what is mine. What is mine is mine to do with as I please. I shall not leave my throne."

The Peacock Cat's grumble turned into a purr of contentment as he settled comfortably on his throne for a nap.

One of the guests from the Inn who, at first, had seemed much bored by the idea of attending closing exercises of a country school, began to show some interest. He said to Mr. Morris, who was sitting next to him :

"Who wrote that play? It has a certain element of drama in it."

"The children helped the teacher write the play. I have heard them talking about it for months. It is delightful to me how they have caught the idea of the Peacock Cat. He was a monster invented by me."

"An excellent symbol — picturesque."

Just then a chorus was heard off stage. The children were chanting behind a redwood stump :

“Boom, boom, we’ve left the moon,
Dead old, dry old barren moon,
Boom, boom, we stamp and stump
The hardness out of every bump.

“Boom, boom, boomity boom,
Here we come so give us room,
Boom, boom, we stump and stamp,
We grind to powder as we tramp.”

They sang with vim. John’s voice rose above the others, strong and sure. Aunt Abigail said to Uncle Darius as she gently squeezed his hand :

“John’s voice is so beautiful, it is a shame to have it wasted in the wilderness. He should be singing in a choir at home.”

Uncle Darius nodded. The play was resumed. The Peacock Cat awoke from his nap and called :

“What noise is that I hear ? Who comes to threaten and to jeer ?”

The Unicorn leaped on the stage again and said calmly :

“Not to threaten, not to jeer,
Your Majesty. You asked them here
To be your guests and share what cheer
Your stony kingdom has to offer.”

“Bid them enter,” grumbled the Cat.

John, King of the Blue Moon, came forth from the bracken.

On his black hair he wore a crown of huckleberry leaves starred with the scarlet flowers of the Indian pink. In the front of the crown a crescent moon, shining blue, stood like a jewel against the black hair. About his waist John wore a yellow sash which fell nearly to his knees in front, then trailed on the ground in back, scattering seeds and flowers as he walked.

The boy's supple shoulders and arms glowed like pale copper against the redwood background as he approached the throne of the Peacock Cat.

"Good day, Your Majesty. I greet you."

"Greetings. I bid you welcome. What stones I have you may rest upon. My Cook will serve the popovers—my Lady will soon appear."

The Blue Moon King sat upon the stones. The Unicorn stood in the background, humming the little tune. Then came the Lady followed by the Cook, bearing a tray of popovers all brown from the oven. The Lady, who was Fanny, walked languidly toward the Blue Moon King. She offered her hand to him to be kissed. Then she wrapped her long train about her and sat on the edge of the throne of the Peacock Cat. She rubbed him under the chin till he began to purr.

Leora, the Cook, passed the popovers to all. Very politely the meal was eaten before the conversation commenced. The three Sprites reappeared and danced without singing. Their presence disturbed the Peacock Cat and discussion commenced again, ending in a riot when the Peacock Cat was taken from his throne and told to remove the rocks, one by one, if it took him all the rest of his life to do it.

The greedy Cat slunk off into the woods, growling as he went. Above the sound of his growling the final song of the children rose in triumph to the treetops. A little breeze stirred the leaves on the big maple tree. The Blue Moon play was finished.

"Bravo, bravo," called the delighted audience, while Mr. Morris clapped louder than anyone.

CHAPTER XVII

ICE CREAM BY THE CAMPFIRE



IN THE LEAFY dressing room on the bank of the stream, Florence and the other girls changed their costumes. They put on their best dresses to be ready for the picnic lunch. Leora said :

“We are going to have ice cream, a whole can full. It is coming on a truck from town.”

“How do you know ?” asked Fanny.

“I heard Mr. Gayforth say so. He ordered it for us. Listen, I think I hear a car coming now.”

“We had better hurry,” said Florence. “If you will button my dress, I will button yours, Helen.”

“Turn around. There, I think you are getting too big for this dress. You surely are growing up. What are you going to do this vacation ?”

“I don’t know yet. Mother would like to go to San Francisco. She wants to see some plays. What are you going to do, Helen ?”

“Nothing. We never do anything but work on the farm.

I have to take care of the chickens. If they were not fed twice a day they would die. I wish they would die."

"Why, Helen, what's the matter with you? You are crying. Everybody else is happy because it's the last day of school."

"I like school. When I am with Miss Luella I forget the chickens and the scoldings at home."

"I tell you what, you come to our house every day. We will paint in my playhouse. Something nice will happen, something extra nice, the way it did for John. Did you hear about his being a lord?"

"I don't believe it. He is an Indian."

"Not much Indian, only a quarter. I guess three-quarters white, when it's blue blood, is pretty good."

"Maybe one-quarter Indian is better. Indians don't seem to worry much."

"John's mother worries and she is half Indian. She worries because she is lonely with no husband, no father and mother. But Helen, those English relatives of John's make her feel better. They are more fun."

"How can old people be fun?"

"Well, anyway, they are. I love them. Now, let's go up the bank and eat; I'm hungry after all the dancing and singing."

All of the guests were standing around, talking, near the big maple tree. Tables were set out in the sunshine on the edge of the road. It was too cold under the trees. Coffee in a big tin boiled on a campfire.

"Here, Edward, help move this coffee to the back of the truck. Then everybody can help himself."

Edward and his father carried the heavy tin of coffee between them. There were handles so that they could do it safely. Everybody helped himself to coffee. Mrs. Reidy from the Inn handed a cup to Aunt Abigail. Florence heard her say :

"You would be much more comfortable if you had one of our cottages while you are visiting in Humboldt County."

"But we like it so much where we are. We like the swallow's nest by the door. We like the smell of the sea that comes up the valley. It is so much like the west coast of Ireland. Besides it seems as if our dear nephew were near us in that house."

"But how can you manage the care of it all?"

"Oh, Ah Soong is very efficient, quite the best cook we have ever had."

"Ah Soong, a Chinaman?"

"Yes, indeed. My nephew had told us how much he admired the Chinese. You know he lived in Hong Kong for a while. He always had a fancy for Chinese jades and porcelain. We have quite a collection at home."

"Aunt Abigail," interrupted Florence, "what Chinese things did John's father like best to collect?"

"Three-legged toads. We have them in bronze, in pottery, in wood and in brass. We made a cabinet to hold them, there were so many."

"I never saw a three-legged toad. They must be very curious."

"The three-legged toad was a greedy spirit like the Peacock Cat," said Uncle Darius, "but a very good boy fairy caught him out of a well. Generally the boy is shown with the toad."

"I should like to see one of those pieces. Have you any jade ones?"

"We have a white jade piece and one made of turquoise."

"They must be beautiful. Did John's father ever send a Unicorn home from China?"

Uncle Darius answered: "Not that I know of." Then he passed a paper plate of salad to Florence.

Edward was kept busy serving the ice cream. By the time the children had second helpings, they drew near the campfire to get warm. They sat on logs and ate until the big can was empty.

Mr. Gayforth watched them while he stood near Miss Luella, who still wore the silver slippers and the shimmering blue dress. He said to her:

"You have wonderful material to mold in those children, and you know how to do it. The play was a great success."

"They are dears, it is no trouble whatever to teach them. I love every one of them. You seem to love them too, Mr. Gayforth, ordering so much ice cream for them."

Miss Luella walked toward the children and spoke to Edward. He made a speech for the school, thanking everybody for coming to the program, thanking the mothers for the picnic lunch and Mr. Gayforth for the ice cream.

Then Edward's father, who was one of the school trustees,



They sat on logs and ate the ice cream.

jumped up on the truck and asked for attention. He spoke out loud :

“Friends, let us give a vote of thanks to Miss Luella for her excellent work with our children during the last year.”

Everybody cried : “Aye, aye !”

The closing exercises of the Pigeon Creek School were finished. Vacation had begun.

CHAPTER XVIII

REGULAR MEETING



ELEN WENT to see Florence the next morning, as soon as she could be spared from the farm. She found her friend looking for berries in the strawberry patch.

"What do you think happened?" asked Florence. "Pee-wee got loose from the woodshed last night and ate most of the strawberries. He must have had company coons for there are big and little tracks on the wet sand by the creek. They point this way. Now we have no berries to serve to the Club this afternoon."

"That's too bad, isn't it? Do you think your family will make you give up Pee-wee?"

"Of course not. My mother says that children are always getting into mischief. You can't turn a child out of the house just because he bothers people."

"But if Pee-wee invites all his relatives to eat your mother's strawberries something will have to be done."

"I suppose so, but I am not going to do it. Pee-wee loves this home. He would miss it terribly if he were turned loose.

I should miss him so I couldn't stand it. Helen, help me pick what berries are left. Maybe we can find enough."

John came along just then. He learned what had happened. "Never mind," he said, "you come over to our strawberry patch. We have plenty of berries. Everybody is welcome."

So Florence and Helen went to his mother's beautiful garden. She helped them pick the berries.

"Have you cream enough?" she asked. "I can let you have some if you need it."

"Thanks so much. Maybe we do need extra cream because so many people are coming to the meeting. Some guests from the Inn will be there. Of course Aunt Abigail and the two uncles are coming. Wasn't it good they stayed overnight at the Inn?"

"It was the right thing to do, so long as they were to be at the meeting today."

"We expect you, too," said Florence. "Something important is going to happen."

"I shall be there. Now take this pitcher of cream. John, you carry it for Florence, so she can have her hands free for these roses I picked."

"Oh, what pretty yellow ones!" cried Florence. "I like yellow roses the best of all."

"So do I," said Helen.

When the girls had finished decorating the living room with freshly cut huckleberry greens, they put the yellow roses in a bowl on the sideboard near the blue glass float. Helen admired the effect. She said :

"Your mother has so many pretty things. I like the stand Edward made for the fishing float. It goes well with the candlesticks."

"Edward is a wonder. He can do 'most anything. This vacation he is going to turn a lot of things to show at the County Fair in August. Maybe he will win a prize."

"Probably he will. He seems to get whatever he goes in for. I think his new bicycle is a beauty. It must have cost a lot of money."

"It did. Edward earned it all himself. He didn't save much for the Pee-wee Club, though, only fifty cents."

"Well, that is pretty good, I think."

"Every bit helps. Now let us go to the stump house and play. We can take our lunch and be back in time for the meeting."

While the two girls were out of the house Mrs. Dayton prepared everything for the meeting of the Pee-wee Club. She put the dining-room chairs in the living room, dusted the shelves which held her Chinese art objects, stacked up the music sheets by the piano and laid a fire ready to light in the fireplace. She placed the most comfortable chair near the hearth for Aunt Abigail.

By two o'clock the people came. The meeting was called to order by Mr. Gayforth. The minutes of the last meeting were read by Edward, the secretary and treasurer of the Club. Mr. Gayforth, the president, asked him to give the financial report. Edward stood up and read :

largest sum given by one of the children. Mr. Gayforth did not call the meeting to order this time, for Edward spoke.

"Mr. President, I think everybody has been very generous in helping the Pee-wee fund with hard-earned money. I wish to double what I gave. I shall change my fifty cents to one dollar."

At this the excitement rose. There were shouts of, "Good boy, Edward. We shall buy the grove of redwoods and have money left over." Edward read again :

By Florence Dayton \$.30
being money found in a crease between cushions on a red-plush sofa.

When this was read Aunt Abigail laughed out loud. She whispered to Uncle Darius : "The mermaid must have lost it."

Edward continued : "The total sum raised is three dollars and ninety-five cents. Added to what we had on hand, there should be in the treasury seven dollars and fifteen cents. I am sorry to say there must be deducted twenty-five cents for the cost of a new minute book."

Silence and questioning looks greeted the secretary who said solemnly : "That mascot of ours, Pee-wee the coon, upset a can of paint over the old minute book, making it useless."

Mr. Gayforth interrupted Edward at this point. He said : "I suppose a vote of censure should be passed on our friend Pee-wee, but what do you say to forgiving him ? Coons will be coons. Will some one make a motion to forgive Pee-wee ?"

John stood up and made the motion, saying that he had already forgiven Pee-wee by copying the minutes from the old book into the new.

Mr. Gayforth asked all in favor, after his seconding the motion, to say, "Aye."

The vote was unanimous. Mr. Gayforth thanked John for the work he had done for the Pee-wee Club. Then he made a real speech. He looked most serious. The children and Miss Luella wondered what had happened.

"To the members of the Pee-wee Club and to our guests, I wish to say that a serious matter has developed in regard to the grove of redwoods we wished to purchase for the state of California. Those trees grow on a timber claim once owned by someone who is now dead. The lumber company for which I work wishes to acquire the land by paying back taxes. Their object is to cut the trees for lumber."

Mr. Gayforth paused a moment. He saw the look of dismay on Miss Luella's face. He heard Florence exclaim :

"They shall not cut the trees back of my father's barn."

The mill boss looked sad indeed as he continued his speech.

"My friends, I was asked by the lumber company to investigate the matter and to estimate how many feet of lumber could be made from those old trees. As I walked in the forest, which we want so much to save, I knew that I could not be the man to condemn them. I have resigned my position with the lumber company."

Everybody in the room clapped loudly. Miss Luella's eyes were dimmed by tears. Mr. Gayforth closed the meeting with

a few words. Then all the people talked and wondered what was to be done. Mrs. Dayton said :

“We will all feel better if we have some refreshments. Florence, you and Helen help me serve the strawberries and cream.”

The three went into the kitchen. Florence said to Helen as she ate an enormous strawberry :

“Now we do have to work hard to save the trees.”

“How can we ? How can we ?” moaned Helen.

CHAPTER XIX

WAYS AND MEANS



WHILE MRS. DAYTON and the two girls were in the kitchen dishing out the strawberries, a general questioning started in the living room. Aunt Abigail asked :

“What was the name of the man who took up the timber claim in the first place?”

“That we do not know. The important thing is that he sold it for very little to a man named John Henry. The deed is recorded in John Henry’s name.”

“And who is this John Henry? Who are his descendants?”

“We have not yet found out,” answered Mr. Gayforth. “We only know that the taxes have not been paid for five years.”

Nobody but John noticed that his mother slipped quietly out of the room. John wondered. He decided to follow, for he saw her pass a window and run in the direction of home.

John caught up with her as she entered the garden. “What is it, Mother? Why are you so excited?”

The woman was trembling. Her eyes were shining bright as she said :

"Come inside, John. There, close the door. Only you and I must talk about what has happened."

"What is it, Mother ?"

By this time she was unlocking the trunk, the treasure chest which held her husband's things. From the back section made for parasols she took a roll of papers. She handed it to John. "Read the papers," she commanded.

John, in confusion, looked at the legal papers. There in his hands he held a deed, from Humboldt County, with John Henry's name written upon it.

"And who is John Henry ?" asked the boy.

"John Henry was my father, the man who caught the big fish. The land with the old redwoods is ours, John, yours and mine."

"But, Mother, I thought your father's name was Lincoln."

"Many people thought so. My father was indifferent. He used to say : 'What's in a name ?' It is what people do that counts."

"Why did you not tell me these trees were ours. We will lose them, Mother, if the back taxes are not paid."

"How could I pay taxes, John, when there was no money ? Your father paid them as long as he lived. Even Heart's Desire is burdened by unpaid taxes."

"Mother, Mother, are we to lose that, too ?" John looked as if he were going to cry. "We must not lose Heart's Desire."

"My son, I have worked to keep the land and trees that

my people enjoyed before any white men came to tax them. I have tried to keep them for you forever but, at times, there has not been money enough to feed you, let alone to pay taxes."

She looked very solemn. Her big brown eyes were sad and still as a shadowed mountain lake. John saw the look he knew so well. He said quietly :

"Come, Mother, we will take this deed to Mr. Gayforth. He and my uncles will know what to do."

The woman's expression changed suddenly. Fierceness came into her eyes, fierceness of a hunted animal. She said savagely : "They shall not have Heart's Desire."

"No, Mother, they shall not. I will find a way to save it and the trees."

"Go, John. I shall stay quietly here. I do not like to meet so many people."

John ran as fast as he could to Florence's house. He burst into the living room where everybody sat, eating strawberries and cream. Even Pee-wee was there, washing his strawberry in a bowl of water. John was so excited he forgot to be polite. He called out :

"Mr. Gayforth, Florence, Uncle Darius, listen ! My grandfather was John Henry. My mother owns the redwoods we wish to save. Here is the deed and her father's will. Here are the tax receipts."

Mr. Gayforth answered for the astonished company. "My friends, we must call another meeting immediately. There is no time to lose. Who among us will act in this matter of saving the old trees from being cut ?"

Uncle Darius stood up and raised his hand. While all the people kept very quiet he said :

"It seems the trees under discussion belong to the widow of our nephew. They will eventually belong to his son John. Whatever property has been inherited by our nephew's son we will protect. We only hope that the sum for back taxes is not too great, for our English investments are at low ebb."

Aunt Abigail spoke when Uncle Thaddeus finished reading :

"It may not be the time and place to say what I have to say. I never attended a formal business meeting in my life. My brothers do that for me. I know nothing of where the money comes from to pay the servants at home. I only know that we have fewer and fewer of the necessities of life but, if there is not money enough to pay the taxes on John's American estate, perhaps I can help. I own jewels that were our mother's and her mother's and her grandmother's."

Aunt Abigail's soft cheeks were flushed a delicate pink. Her hand trembled as she adjusted the lace scarf on her head. She sat down again.

Florence rushed to her and threw her arms about her. "Dear Aunt Abigail," she cried, "you will not have to do that. We will find a way."

Aunt Abigail smiled wistfully as she held Florence's hand. She whispered :

"What use are necklaces and tiaras to an old woman like me ? I have no daughter to give them to."

It was at this moment that one of the guests from the Inn spoke. He had been silent and interested all the time.

"I wish to tell you people that I think what you are trying to do is very fine, but you need business advice, all of you. No good business man would resign his position as Mr. Gayforth has. May I suggest that the English gentlemen waste no time but visit the County Assessor's office to find out what sum it is necessary to raise to pay delinquent taxes."

"You are right," said Mr. Gayforth. "That shall be done tomorrow morning. I will take them to the office. The meeting is now adjourned."

After the people left the house, Florence went dancing all over the place, she was so happy. She said to her mother :

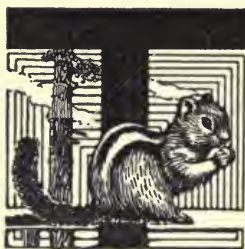
"Our club is really doing good. Pee-wee is a fine mascot. He has a magic way of making things happen."

"There is nothing magic about his way of eating strawberries. You must not let him get loose again, Florence."

"I won't."

CHAPTER XX

THE WISHING PLACE



THE FIRST heavy fog of the summer came rolling over the hills from the ocean. Tall redwoods reached toward the mist, welcoming it as they had for hundreds of years. Rank after rank of forest trees faded into the distance, fog-claimed and silent.

John walked alone in the dripping woods. The flowers of early spring were gone, replaced by ripening seed pods. Green brakes spread their fronds where trilliums had been. A spider web beaded with crystal fog drops hung between two hazel bushes.

A mourning dove called, waited and called again. John felt how fitting the notes were among the fog-draped trees, sad and solemn. "Like my mother's people," he thought, "quiet and lonely as the woods."

The boy walked on, brushing aside the wet, rank shrubbery, breaking a dead limb here and there to clear the way. He reached a place where large trees grew in a circle about twenty-five feet across. The soil was strewn with brown, dried sprays

of redwood. Fallen logs outlined the circle. It was a bowl-shaped place, dark and sheltered.

John sat down on one of the logs. He needed to be alone with his thoughts. His two uncles and Mr. Gayforth had gone to town to find out about the unpaid taxes. John knew that Mr. Gayforth would do all that he could to save the trees from being cut for lumber. The boy felt free to think his own thoughts, free to dream as he had many a time in this spot in the woods which he called "The Wishing Place."

He fastened his gaze on a burled trunk whose forms were like queer monsters twisted and writhing. He knew those forms well. He had named them when he was a little boy. He had given them Indian names learned from his mother. There were Melak the elk, Witkal the coyote, and little Withot the chipmunk.

To John as a little boy the forms in the trunk of the old tree had been so real that he had talked to them, telling them his troubles and wishing for things. Today he wished for so much that he spoke to the elk.

"Melak, I wish to save the forest. You and Witkal the coyote and little Withot the chipmunk are in danger. I wish the greatest wish of my life. I shall wish all day. I shall wish all day that money is found to pay the taxes men have put upon you."

John's brown eyes gazed steadily at the burled redwood tree as he finished speaking. He waited for a sign. He heard a slight rustle behind the tree. A lively chipmunk appeared sitting on top of the burled coyote head. Chipmunk sat up hold-

ing a green hazelnut in his paws. His bright eyes were full of trust. He began to nibble at the nut.

"What have you to tell me, Withot?"

The chipmunk left the nut on top of the burled head of old coyote and ran across the forest floor to John. The boy felt in his pocket to find some walnut meats he had brought for the chipmunk. He put a piece of walnut on the log. As he did that he said :

"I wish to find money to save these trees. I wish, I wish, I wish to find money to save these trees."

"Chip, chip," squeaked Withot. "Chip, chip."

John was sure his Wishing Place would help him. He began to feel at peace, sure and calm. The forest always made him feel that way.

"Nothing bad will happen," he said to chipmunk.

"Chip, chip," answered the little fellow.

A drop of water fell on John's hand from the leaves above. "It is a good sign," he said, "a very good sign."

He looked up. The fog hid the upper branches of the redwoods, making walls like the sides of a house. It shut John in the silent Wishing Place. Chipmunk ran away. John was truly alone with his wish, which he kept saying over and over until he became drowsy under the spell of the words : "I wish, I wish, I wish that the trees may be saved."

The soft fog closed in about the boy. His mind became sleepy with his wishing. So sure he was that the good he desired would come to pass, that he fell asleep in his Wishing



Chipmunk sat up, holding a green hazel nut in his paws.

Place. He dreamed a beautiful dream, a vision of olden times. He saw in his dream a tall man with long black hair and white skin. His garment was made of moleskins nicely sewed together. The gray softness of the fur against the white skin of the man matched the gray softness of the fog about him. A light seemed to shine faintly behind the man. In John's vision he watched the light which enveloped the man. It took form.

Delicately the light form moved and stood beside the man. It was a woman tall and slender and white. Her dress was made of white deerskin with deep fringes dotted with pieces of abalone shell which clinked when she moved. In her hands she held a band of deerskin on which were sewn brilliant red feathers from the heads of hundreds of woodpeckers. The woman tied the red feather band about the black hair of the tall man. It shone in the fog like fire. The woman smiled at the man who took her hand and led her to the log where John sat. In his dream John knew that the Wigi-doko-wok were near him. He felt sure that his wish would be granted. The trees would be saved.

When he awoke, Withot, the chipmunk was again sitting on a burl of the big redwood. "Chip, chip," he said. "Chip, chip, chip."

John ran gladly back to his home. In the kitchen he found his mother making butter in a small churn. She sang softly as she worked. She seemed as happy and cheerful as John himself. She smiled as he entered the room.

"What have the trees been telling you?" she asked.

John's eyes were glowing with the wonder of his dream. He told his mother about the Wigi-doko-wok.

"They were white, Mother, as you told me they were. The woodpecker headdress shone like fire, it was so red."

"Dreams are wishes of the past," said the mother. "In your Wishing Place among the trees other people have wished and dreamed for thousands of years."

The mother finished churning the cream. She poured off the buttermilk and handed a glass of it to John.

The boy drank it and was satisfied. He said as he looked out the kitchen window :

"Here come Mr. Gayforth and our aunt and uncles. They are back from the courthouse."

"Take them into the living room, John."

Aunt Abigail, Uncle Darius and Uncle Thaddeus sat down by the table where the sewing basket stood with its pieces of cloth for the nearly completed rug.

Mr. Gayforth and John stood looking at the rug.

"Do you see that little chipmunk?" asked the boy. "He is a good friend of mine. My mother calls this rug 'The Wishing Place.'"

"It is a piece of real art," answered Mr. Gayforth.

Just then Uncle Darius took a book from a shelf. It was a volume of *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea*. On the flyleaf was written *John Clifford. This is the best book in the world.*

Uncle Darius smiled and showed the inscription to Uncle Thaddeus.

"Just like our nephew, always looking for sea adventure. It was hard to keep him on land."

"What is it?" asked Aunt Abigail. "What are you talking about?"

"A book of our nephew's, *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea*. He has written on the flyleaf *This is the best book in the world.*"

"I remember when he read it at home. He used to tell me he was going to know the sea. Now to think he came way out here on the Pacific Ocean and settled among the redwoods. It is all strange. Strange, too, that we should be here trying to save the redwoods."

"It does seem absurd," said Uncle Darius, "that Americans themselves cannot save these wonderful trees. Thaddeus, you tell our nephew's wife what occurred at the Court House."

"It is quite important that you and John know how matters stand. The taxes on the hundred and sixty acres of redwood timber have not been paid for five years. Also the taxes on the property at Heart's Desire have been unpaid. We found out that the back taxes and the penalties amount to a considerable sum. That's bad news, as you Americans say. But there's some good news too. We found that a law has been passed this year canceling the penalties if the taxes are paid before August. Mr. Gayforth, Uncle Darius and I have gone over the whole matter carefully and we have a plan."

Poor John! Numbers and laws and penalties wearied him but he saw the need of close attention. He brushed aside the books on the table, put his elbows on it and supported his head

on his hands. His mind was made up to understand the plan that was to save the trees for all of the people. He listened to Uncle Thaddeus.

"The plan is really quite simple. We need not pay the taxes on the timber land if John's mother is willing to give the grove to the State. Her gift would save the trees forever, and could be a monument to the memory of her husband and our nephew."

John's mother looked a bit dazed. She did not know what to say. She wondered if this were one more way of taking from her what she held so dear. She turned her face toward Mr. Gayforth. She knew that he was her friend, and would advise her. He said :

"Listen to the rest of the plan."

Uncle Thaddeus continued : "The trees can be saved by this method, but if we are to keep Heart's Desire, the back taxes on that must be paid. Here is our plan. The Pee-wee Club set out to buy the redwoods. If John's mother sees fit to give them to the State, the gift would be a generous one. The Club could show its appreciation by using its funds to pay the taxes on Heart's Desire."

John had listened attentively. He watched his mother's face. Then he said quite simply :

"It seems to me we are in the same place we started from. The Pee-wee Club has in its treasury six dollars and ninety cents. What is the amount due on Heart's Desire, Mr. Gayforth ?"

"Here are the figures, John. There is only about two hundred and fifty dollars owing."

John looked quite discouraged as he answered: "That is a lot of money for the Pee-wee Club to raise."

"We must find a way," said Mr. Gayforth. "Suppose we let the matter stand to be discussed with your mother. I will call another meeting of the Club."

Aunt Abigail spoke. "I am sure that the plan will work. It sounds good. Now we must take the stage out to our place. Ah Soong will be lonely without us to cook for."

CHAPTER XXI

THE FOREST IS SAFE



JOHN AND HIS mother sat eating supper in their kitchen. They were so much interested in all they had to talk about, that they gave little thought to their good bread, milk and berries.

"What have you decided to do, Mother, about giving the trees to the State for a park?"

"You must help me decide, John. The trees are very valuable for lumber. I did not tell Mr. Gayforth that the lumber company sent a man here not long ago, offering to buy our land with its old trees."

"What did you tell him, Mother?"

"Nothing, but he told me the property might be put up at auction because we owe so much for back taxes. It sounded like a threat. I cannot understand why the trees should belong to anybody. They have always been here. This is their home. They were here before any men were. They were here when the ancient people came. The ancient people knew

the value of the forest, John. You and I must know it too. The trees belong to Mother Earth."

"That is what Mr. Gayforth says. He says the earth will die without her trees. The sea will consume her."

John's mother looked into the dark eyes of the son she loved. "My boy," she said tenderly, "I have tried to keep for you these trees my people have known for thousands of years. Now tell me, shall I accept the large sum of money that has been offered? We need it very much."

"No, Mother, you must not. This green forest home is for many others besides us. I will find a way to buy our food and care for us after you give the trees to the State. We can move to Heart's Desire. We can fish in the ocean. We can do many things to find our food. Mr. Gayforth will help us."

"Then it is decided. You speak for me tonight at the meeting. We will give the land with its trees for all the children who are to come."

"That is like you, Mother. I knew when I sat in the Wishing Place that the trees would be saved."

John helped his mother get ready to go to the meeting. They crossed the bridge over Pigeon Creek and went gladly to Florence's house.

When Mr. Gayforth saw them enter the room he knew by the peace written on their faces that the forest was saved. He told the members of the Club what had happened at the Court House. Then John spoke for his mother. As he stood up with a paper of notes in his hand, the firelight outlined his

profile molded with a dignity beyond his years. His voice was rich in tone as he said :

"Our forest is safe. The Wishing Place of my ancestors has told me so. The laws of the white people have told me so. My mother has told me so. She will give this grove to California if her home at the Cape is saved for her. Mr. Gayforth has told you that two hundred and fifty dollars will save that home. I speak for my mother. I speak for the forest."

John paused. He saw Miss Luella looking at him with so much affection in her eyes that he smiled, given courage to resume his speech.

"The Pee-wee Club can surely find a way ; Miss Luella will find a way."

When John sat down Miss Luella rose to speak. She said with great feeling :

"There is a way. These children who are my pupils can give their Blue Moon play in town. They can surely raise the money."

"That is practical business," said the guest from the Inn. "I should like to have a part in that. I will find a theater for you. And we visitors can help by spreading word about the play. You will need to have it advertised, to attract a big audience."

It was at this point that Edward spoke. He had been thinking hard. He believed that he had arrived at a solution.

"Mr. President," he began, "I suggest that the Pee-wee Club borrow at once two hundred and fifty dollars from the bank. We can lay our plans for the play before the banker, who will see that the Pee-wee Club means business. He will know he

is not taking any risks. Therefore, Mr. President, I move that the Pee-wee Club immediately borrow two hundred and fifty dollars from the bank."

There was a twinkle of merriment in Mr. Gayforth's eye. He said :

"Before I put the motion I wish it understood that all you children are responsible for the repayment of the money in case the play fails."

"It won't fail ! No, no, it won't fail !" came in a disorderly chorus from the children.

Mr. Gayforth laughed. "Well, anyway, you know where we stand. It will take many bantam eggs, many pickings of peas and strawberries, pounds and pounds of cascara to repay that much money. The red-plush sofa cannot be depended upon for any more hidden treasure. So, I will put the motion. Those in favor of borrowing two hundred and fifty dollars say aye."

There was a shrieking response, a prolonged *aye, aye, aye*, an enthusiastic unit of opinion. When Mr. Gayforth asked for "Those opposed," only a round of merry laughter answered him.

Miss Luella asked for the floor. She said earnestly : "We have been so wrapped up in the business of the Pee-wee Club, that we have overlooked the noble generosity of John and his mother. Mr. President, in appreciation of our friends, who believe that this land should belong to all the people who inhabit it, I move that the Pee-wee Club give a vote of thanks to John and his mother."

The motion was carried, not boisterously this time, but solemnly and with fervor.

John's mother seemed unconscious of the tribute. No responsive smile lightened her face. Her eyes looked into space. Her mind seemed far away. She did not hear the appointment of a committee to wait upon the banker. She was thinking of herself as a young girl, gathering mussels on the beach that is farthest west. She was thinking of the shipwrecked sailor she had found upon the rocks. She could remember the wonder in his eyes when he opened them and saw her smiling at him. She could remember his peace in her father's home, his calling it Heart's Desire.

John's mother was recalled from her revery by Miss Luella, who had been watching. The teacher put her hand on the woman's shoulder and whispered :

"Your father and John's father would be very happy if they knew what you have done with the trees. I think Abraham Lincoln would be glad, too."

Those words gave the quiet woman an idea. She rose and spoke for the first time in the meeting. She said :

"I should like the forest which was my father's to be called the Lincoln Grove, the Abraham Lincoln Grove."

"It is a fitting name," said Mr. Gayforth. "Your wish shall be granted."

All the company left the house, happy about what had happened and eager to start work to raise the money.

CHAPTER XXII

OPEN SESAME



THE NEXT MORNING Florence was alone, busily dusting the dining room. As she worked she thought about a number of things. She carefully lifted the blue fishing float and placed it on a soft chair while she cleaned the top of the sideboard. Everything was quiet in the room, quiet and peaceful. The Canton chinaware plates leaned against the wall of the cupboard. The teapot and cups stood in front of them, orderly and beautiful.

Outside the sun shone softly through the clearing fog. The redwoods on the hill back of the barn stood faintly outlined like trees in a Chinese painting. Thinking of that, Florence was reminded of Ah Soong. She wondered how he had fared alone while John's relatives were away from Heart's Desire. She would like to go out there again.

She was just about through with her work. Everything looked shining and clean. She moved toward the blue glass ball ready to put it back on the sideboard. She heard a low, rumbling noise. Then the house shook. The Canton plates

in the cupboard fell against the glass door. Dogs about the ranch barked and howled. Florence wondered what was happening. She took the glass ball from the chair and sat down with it in her lap. Again everything was quiet, until Edward ran into the house calling :

"Did you feel that earthquake? It was a jazzy one."

"I didn't know what had happened," answered Florence. "I'm glad nothing was broken. Wasn't it lucky that I had just put the fishing float in the chair. I should hate to have that fall and break after it came clear across the ocean in safety. You had better help me fix the dishes in the cupboard."

"Look out," said Edward. "Don't let them fall out when you open the cupboard door. Mother would feel dreadfully if she came home from town and found them broken."

"I wonder if the earthquake was bad out at Heart's Desire," said Florence. "It would probably frighten Aunt Abigail. I think she should not be there, Edward. I'm going over to John's house and talk to his mother about it."

"All right. I will watch things here till mother comes. If I know Aunt Abigail, she probably enjoyed the earthquake the way she does everything else that happens."

Florence ran out in the yard and across the lane. She found John's mother packing a basket with strawberries, fresh lettuce, butter and fried chicken.

"Are you going somewhere?" she asked. "Did you feel the earthquake?"

"It was only a little shake, Florence, but I think we ought

to go to Heart's Desire to see how things are. I am worried about the dear old people out there. Aunt Abigail should have some woman to help her."

"That is just what I was thinking. May I go with you and John?"

"Of course you may if your mother says so."

"Mother is not home but I'll ask Father."

"You will have to hurry, Florence. We are going on the stage, which leaves soon."

Florence packed her little overnight case as soon as her father said she might go. For the second time she and John and his mother started for Heart's Desire. They arrived late in the afternoon. The fog hung heavy over the hills. The smoke that came from the chimney of the house blended with the fog. It was good to be inside the room with a fire burning in the fireplace.

"How nice it is that you came," said Aunt Abigail. "Now we can have more stories about this strange land. Just carry the things you have brought into the kitchen. Ah Soong will take care of them."

When the greetings were over and everybody was sitting by the fire, Uncle Thaddeus said to John :

"We do not know what happened this morning but the whole house shook as if a big dog had it in his teeth. The fish up there looked as if they were swimming. One of them actually jumped to the floor. I think it is the one you call a muskellunge."

"I heard a noise like a growling animal," said Aunt Abigail. "I was in the kitchen giving orders to Ah Soong. He picked me right up in his arms and carried me into the yard. I never heard of such behavior. 'You stand there, Missee,' he said. 'Bimeby all still, you come in again.' What was it all about, John?"

"Just a little earthquake. We felt it at Pigeon Creek, too. Did anything get broken here?"

"Tell them what you found in the barn, Thaddeus."

"We heard quite a loud noise as if something had fallen. It was not in the house. We went to the barn. Inside where the large rock forms the rear wall we found that the loose boards and boxes that stood against the wall had fallen. Some loose rocks fell too, showing an opening in the wall. It was like an entrance to a cave. We procured candles and entered. We found a storeroom full of boxes and barrels. I suppose, John, you and your mother knew of this storeroom?"

John's mother answered: "That cave belonged to my mother's people. It goes far back in the rock. My father built the barn in front of it to protect the entrance. He stored many things there that he had collected in his travels."

Florence and John listened eagerly to the story of the cave. Florence asked:

"Did you open any of the boxes and barrels?"

"Most certainly not," said Aunt Abigail. "We knew they must belong to John's mother."

"I hope we can see the cave tomorrow. It sounds just like

Aladdin's cave. Instead of your saying 'Open Sesame,' the earthquake opened it for you. It must be Aladdin's cave because Ah Soong is here and I thought he was like Aladdin when I first saw him. Maybe he will find the lamp."

John's mother smiled at Florence as she answered :

"I do not know what is in all the boxes and barrels, but there is one chest that my father kept his horses in."

"His horses !"

"Yes, the toy horses he collected in every country he visited. He had carved wooden horses from Sweden, Germany and Russia, porcelain horses from Holland, a marble one from Italy and a bronze horse from China. I remember he told me he bought that in Peking. It is the shape of an incense burner. There is a hole in the top of its back."

"May we see the horses of the world tomorrow?"

"Surely, Florence. We can get Ah Soong to help us open the boxes. It will be fun to see my father's things again. Now that our redwood forest is to belong to the State I feel like sharing all of my father's treasures."

"What did you say about the trees belonging to the State?" asked Aunt Abigail. "Have you decided to give them as a monument to your husband?"

"I have asked that the forest be called the Abraham Lincoln Grove. John is the memorial of his father."

"Quite so, quite so," answered Aunt Abigail. "Have the taxes been raised to clear the title to Heart's Desire?"

Florence answered eagerly : "The Pee-wee Club is to borrow

two hundred and fifty dollars from the bank for that. We are to give our Blue Moon play in town to raise money to pay back the loan."

"Will any bank make a loan without security?"

"Our bank will. It's president was at our play. He knows every one of us. He said our play was a winner."

"So it was," said Uncle Darius. "I will back it myself. You can do your banking business with me."

He took his check book out from his pocket and made out a check for two hundred and fifty dollars payable to Mr. Gayforth. "I shall mail this to the president of the Pee-wee Club," he said. "The matter of back taxes will be settled immediately. Now let us have our dinner."

Florence jumped up and ran to Uncle Darius. She threw her arms around him and kissed his pink cheeks.

"Thanks, thanks," she whispered in his ear. "I knew the minute I saw you that you were a royal person."

Uncle Darius let Florence sit on his knee. He was wearing the dressing gown of maroon silk. His blue eyes sparkled with fun. His long slender fingers caressed the little girl's yellow curls. Both eyes and fingers were more eloquent than words. Florence knew that Uncle Darius loved her.

CHAPTER XXIII

HAPPINESS LIKE THE EASTERN OCEAN



IN THE KITCHEN table Ah Soong had spread discs of yellow dough, soon to be made into noodles. Morning duties were many before the cook could be spared to help move the boxes in the cave. Florence watched Ah Soong's deft handling of the rolling pin. She saw the sheets of dough spread and grow thinner on the floured surface. His bracelet knocked occasionally on the table. It fascinated Florence. Its massive circle of mottled brown jade was carved with Chinese writing.

Florence wanted to know all about that bracelet. She wondered how long Ah Soong had worn it. She wanted especially to know what the carved characters meant. But for fear of being impolite she hesitated to ask him questions.

Ah Soong hung a clean tablecloth over the back of a chair. On this he put the thin sheets of dough to dry and harden a bit before he could cut them into noodles. Florence watched him but she was not thinking of noodles. She said shyly :

"Ah Soong, I think you would work more comfortably if you took off that bracelet."

The Chinese looked at the brown jade which encircled his wrist. His pleasant face grew serious. He shook his head back and forth.

"No take 'em off, Missee. Take 'em off bad luck." He moved the band around his thin wrist. To Florence the gesture seemed one of tenderness and affection. Pointing to the carved characters, he said :

"Him say plenty happy days, plenty all same east ocean." He turned the bracelet further. A frown creased his forehead as he struggled with the difficulty of the translation. "Him say get plenty money, plenty good flends, live long time all same as east ocean and south mountain. No take 'em off. You look see here."

Florence drew closer to the cook. She admired the bracelet. She wanted to know about the east ocean.

"You say east ocean, Ah Soong. That is all same west ocean now."

"All same ocean, big ocean. One side China, one side California. California side velly good. No fight all time. Get plenty abalone fish, plenty sea lion, plenty squid, now plenty flends. One time long ago no flends this side east ocean. Evelybody say : 'Chinese must go.' My father tell me."

Florence kept very still. She knew that Ah Soong was unaware that he was in Humboldt County. She listened as he continued :

"My father tell me when I was little boy, about place up north from San Francisco—place Chinese get shot long time ago. No Chinese go that place again. When Chinese little boy bad, his mother say : 'You be good. You no good I send to Humboldt.' Humboldt devil place."

Florence did not know what to say. She thought very hard then she answered :

"Humboldt is good place now, Ah Soong. Humboldt is not like old time long ago."

Ah Soong shook his head solemnly. "My mother tell me Humboldt velly bad. I no go Humboldt."

He dusted the flour from the kitchen table, felt of the noodle dough and was about to peel some potatoes when Aunt Abigail entered the kitchen with John's mother.

"If you have time, Ah Soong, I wish you would help John bring a box from the barn. He will tell you which one we want. You may put it in the living room."

"May I go, too?" asked Florence. "I should like so much to see the cave."

"Surely, run along. John is there now looking over things."

With lighted candles in their hands, John, Florence and Ah Soong prepared to enter the cave. Before doing it, however, Florence insisted that Ah Soong should say appropriately, "Open sesame."

"Open sesame," said the innocent Aladdin as he stood inside the barn near the boards which had been removed from the opening.

"Now we may enter," said Florence, "and hunt for the treasure."

"We won't find much," answered John, "just boxes of old clothes and that chest which holds the horses."

"We might find something you do not know about. Let Aladdin go first."

"No likee cave," said the Chinese. "No likee. Too muchee black. Mebbe devil place."

A pebble fell from somewhere causing the timid Aladdin to jump. "No likee. I no go in cave. I wait outside."

"All right, then. John and I will hunt. You wait for us."

The two treasure seekers had gone about ten feet when the passageway turned. There were no more boxes on the floor.

"What's the use of going any farther?" said John. "There would be nothing else so far in."

"How do you know? There might be something in a crack in the rock. Let me hold both candles while you climb up on that ledge."

"All right, but I don't like the dark hole any better than Ah Soong does."

"I don't like it myself. I feel all creepy and cold, but when I feel that way, something happens. I just know there is treasure on that rock shelf up there. You look, John."

The boy pulled himself up on the ledge. Florence held the candles as high as she could.

"Let me have a candle now," said John. "I think I feel something soft way back."

"Here is the candle. I know you will find something."

"It is a roll of buckskin, soft buckskin, and I can see a papoose basket too."

John was all excitement as he reached for the basket and the buckskin. He handed them to Florence.

"Be sure there is nothing else."

"That seems to be all, Florence, but that buckskin roll is big enough and heavy enough to hold plenty. Let me carry it," said John, as he jumped down from the ledge. "You carry the basket."

They met Ah Soong at the entrance. He was sitting on the chest he had been told to take from the cave. The candle flames were blown out and the treasure seekers ran to the house in excitement. Ah Soong carried the chest on his shoulder, Florence held the basket and John the buckskin roll. Into the living room they filed, calling: "Come see what we found. Everybody come see."

Everybody sat around waiting for the buckskin roll to be opened. Florence put the papoose basket in Aunt Abigail's hands. It was made of open wickerwork with a little seat for a baby to sit in. John's mother told Aunt Abigail that she had been carried in a basket like that when she was a baby.

"How very strange. Did John ride that way too?"

"No, I had a baby buggy with wheels for him."

"Shall we open the roll, Mother?" asked John.

"Yes, let us see what is in it."

As John untied the rawhide string on the bundle he was

aware that he had in his possession something very precious, something that his mother's people had saved for many years. A strong musty smell filled the room as he lifted what appeared to be a skirt made of soft white buckskin and hung with many pieces of abalone shell and strings of lovely brown pine nuts.

"Oh, oh!" cried Florence. "It is beautiful. Once it had madrone berries on it, I am sure. It is the pretty dress the girl wore for Robin Redbreast. Oh, it is wonderful!"

"And see this piece," said John. "It is the headband of woodpecker feathers that I saw in my dream at the Wishing Place."

John and his mother became very solemn. Everybody else kept quiet while they whispered to each other:

"The Wigi-doko-wok, the Wigi-doko-wok. They were dressed in white buckskin and the man wore the scarlet feather band."

Ah Soong looked on with astonishment. He touched the soft white buckskin skirt. "Velly good skin," he said. "Velly good abalone shell. Heap pletty."

"Now let me open the box of horses," said Uncle Thaddeus. "I'm anxious to see what they look like."

Ah Soong took the carefully wrapped art objects out of the box. One by one he showed them to the company—the marble horse from Italy, the porcelain one from Holland, carved wood horses from Sweden.

"I like this piece of bronze," said Uncle Thaddeus. "It seems to be an incense burner. It doesn't look much like a horse. Besides, it has a horn on its head."

He handed it back to Ah Soong who began to jabber in Chinese. Florence jabbered too, she was so excited as she leaned over Ah Soong, who was saying softly, over and over again :

“Chee lin, velly nice Chee lin. Heap good luck. Means ‘I wish you have velly smart son.’”

Ah Soong smiled at John’s mother. He said : “I think you have velly smart son. John velly smart. He find led feather, he find good skin, he find Chee lin.”

Florence’s eyes were wide open with wonder as she gazed at the bronze beast.

“It is the Unicorn,” she whispered. “Let me hold it in my hand. It is the Unicorn come to bring us all good luck.”

Ah Soong put the Unicorn in Florence’s hands. “You keep ’em, Floleence. I go kitchen fix ’em noodle soup.”

Uncle Darius and Uncle Thaddeus admired the old bronze object of art which John’s grandfather had bought in Peking many years before. They admired the red woodpecker head-dress made by the ancient Indians. Uncle Darius said :

“East is east and west is west, but here at Heart’s Desire the twain have met.”

Uncle Thaddeus answered soberly :

“It is truly a magic land here by the western sea, a fairy land where anything may happen.”

Florence holding the bronze Unicorn so Aunt Abigail could see its smooth sides and delicately modeled legs, answered Uncle Thaddeus :

“Ah Soong’s bracelet calls the sea the eastern ocean. Ah

Soong says that means plenty of good things, plenty of friends.
It is our ocean too, only we call it the western ocean."

Uncle Thaddeus made a song on the spot. He chanted :

*All of us here see the sun go down
On the edge of the briny ocean,
But the Chinaman says the sun comes up.
What a strange Oriental notion !*

CHAPTER XXIV

A NEWSPAPER ITEM



AFTER LUNCHEON with its good noodle soup, Uncle Thaddeus sat on the red-plush sofa, looking over his mail and reading a copy of the *Humboldt Enterprise* which had come on the stage.

Ah Soong, attending to his housework about the room, paused a moment to watch Florence, busily arranging the horses of the world on the table. She put the Unicorn alone on the mantelpiece. She wished she had some incense to burn. As if reading her thought, Ah Soong said :

“Bimeby ketchum sandalwood burn inside Chee lin. Good smell come.” He picked up the bronze incense burner. His face beamed as bright as the afternoon sunlight coming through the western windows.

“I say, Soong,” interrupted Uncle Thaddeus, “here’s a story about a Chinese junk that’s come all the way across your eastern ocean. Listen to this.”

Uncle Thaddeus read from the newspaper :

"CHINESE JUNK OFF HUMBOLDT COAST"

"Oriental Ship Makes Long Voyage."

"Marines and lookouts along a hundred-mile stretch of the northern California coast this afternoon were maintaining a close watch for a Chinese junk reported in coastal waters following a three months' journey from the Orient.

"The junk last was reported early this morning when the *S.S. West Planter* radioed she had spoken the strange Oriental craft in the vicinity of Blunt's Reef off the southern Humboldt coast."

"Off Blunt's Reef!" cried Florence. "A Chinese junk off Blunt's Reef right here in Humboldt County! Right here near Blunt's Reef!"

Florence forgot Ah Soong in that moment of mentioning Humboldt County. One glance at his face was enough to tell her that Ah Soong understood. She knew that to him the presence of the junk was a small matter. To Ah Soong the big fact was that he was in Humboldt County. His round face had lost its jolly good nature. Fear was in his eyes. His hands trembled about the loosely held Unicorn. The precious bronze incense burner fell on the stone hearth, breaking one of its slender legs. Ah Soong fled to the kitchen mumbling strange words. He closed the door behind him.

"What is wrong? What has happened?" asked Uncle Thaddeus, who thought it queer that the newspaper story had been so strangely received.

Florence did not try to explain. Her mind was a jumble of broken thoughts—the junk, Blunt's Reef, sandalwood incense, the Unicorn on the floor with a broken leg. Out of the con-

fusion one thought became clear. Sorrowfully she realized that they were to lose Ah Soong. She knew that he would leave. Not even his loyalty to Aunt Abigail could overcome the fear taught him as a little boy in San Francisco. Those words of his mother, "You bad boy, send to Humboldt County," had sunk deep into his mind. Ah Soong left on the stage that afternoon.

"Now what are we to do?" asked Aunt Abigail.

"I think, my dear," said Uncle Darius, "we had better be going back to England."

"Whatever you say is right, Darius, but I do like this place. Shall we come back again?"

"Perhaps so. Perhaps after we have done our duty toward John in the matter of his father's English estate. I think he should return with us."

John's mother, sitting quietly near the fireside with John close by, looked up anxiously. She reached for her son's hand. She said :

"You are an American, John. Your father wished you to live here."

The boy gave his mother's hand a comforting squeeze. He spoke to his uncle :

"If I can help my mother in any way by going to England, I am willing to do it. Now that she has decided to give away her father's redwood trees, for which she was offered a large sum of money, I think I should do something to save my father's English property. She must have means to keep Heart's Desire. I shall go to England with you, but not for long."

"I am sure you will like it there, John," said Aunt Abigail. "You can see Westminster Abbey and all the trees in the Royal Botanic Gardens."

"I shall go to England to help my mother."

Florence smiled at John. She remembered the day in the woods when she had crowned him Prince of the Forest. She said :

"I knew you would go to the mansion of many rooms. You mustn't go, though, until we give the Blue Moon play in town. We need our king."

"We shall wait for that," answered Uncle Darius. "We had better stay at the Inn till the play is given. Now let us all get busy packing. I must say good-by to the swallow."

"I must say good-by to the sea," said Uncle Thaddeus. "Let us plan one last picnic on the beach."

"We can have supper there," said John, "and bake potatoes in the coals. I will go down right away and start the fire for the coals."

John's mother packed the coffeepot and some pieces of tender meat to broil over the fire. Florence carried the paper plates and cups. Uncle Darius and Uncle Thaddeus took blankets and cushions for Aunt Abigail to sit on.

"Do you think you can walk that far?" asked John's mother.

"Of course I can. I love to walk."

Down to the beach they all went. The tide was ebbing. In a sheltered place near a big rock John had built the fire and put the potatoes to roast on glowing coals. Another fire of

driftwood was made on which to boil the coffee and broil the meat.

"What I like about these northern California beaches," said Uncle Darius, "is the abundance of firewood. There is enough for everybody."

"I like to look for queer-shaped pieces," said Florence. "I'm going back a little where the driftwood is piled against the cliff."

"I will go, too," said John, "if Mother will watch the potatoes."

The two children climbed over redwood logs which were so big around they made the climbing quite a task. Between the big logs smaller pieces of wood of many kinds lay piled upon one another.

"Look, John, here is a piece of madrone that looks like a heron."

"And here is a regular sea lion all smooth from the waves."

"Let me see it. Oh, it is wonderful. That wood looks like fir. I wish I could find a good piece of pepperwood for Edward to turn."

"How about this piece, Florence? I will carry it for you."

"That is a good one." Florence paused in her search to look at the pepperwood.

Both children were quiet. Back of them the sun was setting all orange-red like a Chinese lantern.

John's black hair seemed very dark as he stood against the light. His eyes were shadowed so that Florence could not see how they glowed as he spoke to her.

"Do you know this may be the last time we shall play together out farthest west? When I am in England I shall think about it. I know I shall be homesick."

"Oh, no, you won't, John. There will be so many new things to see and do. Before you know it you will be back."

"Will you be here too, Florence?"

"I do not know. I'm so happy right here at home I don't see why I should go anywhere else."

"Let's go back to the campfire. The potatoes must be done by now."

The two children went in a roundabout way back to camp. Where the wet sands of a sheltered cove reflected the light of the setting sun they sat down on a log, looking out to sea. Steep banks rose behind them, thickly overgrown with salal, lupines in seed, small firs and a tangle of blackberry vines. On the rocks low down near the sand, barnacles clung in gray masses. An opening in the rocky bank dripped a beaded curtain of spring water from its dark ceiling.

Sitting quietly watching the tide recede farther and farther away, John said good-by to Farthest West. So quiet were the children, so much a part of all nature about them, that two trustful deer tripped down the cliff to the grotto.

"Look, look," whispered Florence, as she pointed toward the opening in the rocky bank.

There in its shadow, a doe and her fawn stood licking salt from the barnacled rocks.



A doe and fawn stood licking salt from the barnacled rocks.

CHAPTER XXV

WORK AND PLAY



AT PIGEON CREEK children and grown-ups kept busy as busy could be. Summer-time added to the work. Grass ripened into hay which must be cut.

Edward helped his father with the mowing. He raked the rows of fallen grass into haycocks ready to be loaded on wagons and hauled to the big barn. There it was piled when it was dry, ready for the Jersey cows.

The routine of work never ceased, milking morning and night, packing big cans to the creamery every day, cultivating the ground where beans grew in luscious rows—these were the daily tasks to which Edward added the sawing of wood.

He and John were busy chopping branches from the trees which had fallen into the stream during the rain. They hauled what pieces they could to the electric saw which stood near two big apple trees in the wood-yard. John put a log on the saw and Edward held it, throwing the cut piece to a woodpile

to stay until he had time to add it with its companions to the long rows in the shed.

Four white ducks waddled from the stream up to the grassy place where turkeys were scratching.

"Watch that drake," said Edward. "He doesn't let those turkeys feed. He chases them away."

"He seems to be sure of himself. The turkeys only run fast enough to keep out of his way. They never seem to turn on the drake."

"He feels so important and sure of himself he makes the turkeys believe in him."

The saw buzzed and whined, sawdust fell softly to the ground. A bantam hen clucked as she scratched for worms for her baby chicks.

"Soon we have to find time to rehearse the play for the theater," said John.

"I don't have to rehearse," answered Edward. "I know my prologue but I do have to find time for carpenter work on the sets I am making."

The rehearsing took place in the Dayton barn, so big there was plenty of room in one corner for a stage.

"What a lot of fun we are having!" said Leora to Mabel, the Animal Sprite. "I like being in a play."

"So do I, but I hope I don't get stage fright in the theater."

"You won't, Mabel, because you know your part so well. Isn't Florence wonderful when she dances?"

"Yes. Did you hear what she found at Heart's Desire?"

"I heard because she brought the Unicorn with the broken

leg to my father. He is mending it for her at the blacksmith shop. He thinks it is a very good piece of bronze work. Wasn't it strange how the earthquake helped to find the Unicorn?"

"Wasn't it?" asked Florence, who joined the group. "Wasn't it all like *Arabian Nights*, even to a Chinese junk being seen at Blunt's Reef?"

"There were no Chinese on that junk," said Leora. "The paper says there was an American with a Japanese wife and two Russian sailors. They are home in Los Angeles now."

"Anything can happen out at Heart's Desire. It is a fairy place where deer are tame. We saw a doe and fawn licking salt from the rocks at low tide."

Florence took something out of her pocket to show to the girls. "I found these on the beach when I waded out."

"What are they?"

"Sand dollars. You know those flat sea urchins that burrow in the sand?"

"What pretty marks they have on them, like a five-pointed star on one side and little branches on the other. Look, when you hold it in the right light you can see six-sided figures just like on a turtle."

"I hadn't noticed those before," said Florence. "Aren't they pretty? They must be a sort of checkerboard for the sea nymphs."

"Do you mean mermaids?"

"Maybe. Did I tell you about the mermaid Uncle Thaddeus made a poem about—a mermaid riding on the red-plush sofa

that was washed up on the beach? We had such fun out there at Heart's Desire. It is surely a place worth saving. John's relatives are helping. They are taking him to England. He will see the mansion of many rooms that belongs to his family. Maybe he will bring me a dress with spangles on it."

"John is a lucky boy," said Helen. "All the time we thought he was just an Indian, then he turns out to be a lord."

"But he is an Indian, too. I'm glad he is. I'm glad about everything. If John's mother had not owned the trees, we couldn't save them for the State. Now we have to work hard to help her."

"Time for the three Sprites to appear," called Miss Luella. "Music, please, slower. There, that is better. You are doing very well."

She watched every step. She too had rehearsing to do. When they were through for the day she said to the troupe:

"Wednesday we all ride to town for a dress rehearsal at the theater. Everybody be ready by nine o'clock that morning. I shall take care of the costumes."

CHAPTER XXVI

PRESENTS FOR JOHN



IN HER STUMP house Florence was busy sorting a quart of wild blackberries she had picked in the morning. She intended to give a farewell party to John. She had invited Helen and Edward, Dick and Mabel, Leora and Fanny. The eight children of Pigeon Creek school were to meet at one o'clock in the woods where the skunk cabbages hung over the little stream.

When the time came Florence had everything ready. Berries in eight dishes, cream and sugar to put on them, milk to drink and brown bread to go with it.

Florence sat down in front of the stump house to wait. Everything was very quiet. The sun was shining somewhere up in the sky, sending what rays it could to filter through the fragrant redwood boughs. The light seemed green and alive as it settled on the huckleberry bushes and brakes.

Soon Florence heard someone laugh. "That is Edward," she thought. "He must be telling a funny story. He always laughs at his own stories."

A minute later all the children came running toward the stump house. Their hands were full of bundles.

"Hello, Florence. Is there room for all of us in your play-house?"

"If you sit close together, there is room. What have you in the packages? There may not be room for them."

"Let's give them to John outside then."

John looked very shy. He had not expected presents but, as he opened the packages, he became so excited he laughed with the rest of the children.

"What a funny animal this is," he said as he looked at Edward's present. "Why, it is made out of the pepperwood driftwood we found. What do you call it, Edward?"

"Can't you see it is a turtle?"

"Oh, yes, of course. Good old turtle, slow but sure. I like it very much."

"Its back lifts up, John. It is a box. I made it for you."

Florence and the other girls looked at it with admiration. "It would be good to hold candy," said Fanny. "I brought some fudge I made for you."

"Thanks, Fanny, and thanks, Edward. Let us put the candy in right away."

When that was done Helen gave John the present she had made for him. It was a painting of fog drifting in the treetops. It was framed with tiny shells stuck onto pasteboard.

"My, that is pretty, Helen. I shall show it in England when I get there."

"Do," said Florence. "Show it to one of the princesses who lives in the mansion."

"I don't believe there are any princesses as nice as you girls."

John was so surprised when he said those words that he began to blush. He tried to think of something else to say so that Edward wouldn't tease him, but before he could think of anything, Dick handed him his present. It was an abalone shell with the holes filled up so it would hold water.

"You can use it for a soap dish over there in the mansion," said Dick.

Helen looked at the shell. "It is full of rainbows," she said, "just like spray from the waves on a sunny day. I wouldn't put soap in it for the colors might be spoiled."

"Now I have a pepperwood turtle with fudge and an abalone-shell soap dish, a picture of fog framed with limpets. I shall be glad to look at them in England."

"And here is something else," said Leora. "They will not last till you get to England, but popovers are the only things I can make."

"They are good," said John, "and there are enough for all of us."

Mabel handed John a bouquet of dried seed pods and little cones from the redwoods. "They will last forever," she said. "They will keep you from being homesick."

Florence stood by, looking at all the things from forest and sea. "I didn't know what to give you, John," she said. "I

thought maybe you would like the robin's nest that was in the tree near my window. The mother bird did not come back this year, so I know she doesn't need it. I have wrapped it in bark of the madrone."

"It will remind me of the pretty dress with spangles of madrone berries," said John. "All of these home things will make me try, as hard as ever I can, to save the forests we live near."

"Now, let's eat," said Edward. "I'm hungry."

"All right, come right in the playhouse. Everything is ready."

John added the popovers to the lunch. When the last blackberry and the last piece of brown bread were eaten, and not a drop of milk was left or a crumb from the popovers, Florence said :

"Now let us go back near home and have a game of hide and seek."

"I have to get back to work," said Edward. "I have to finish the sets for the play."

When the children reached the barn Florence started the game by counting out with a nursery rhyme :

*Intry mintry cutery corn,
Apple seed and apple thorn,
Wire, brier, limber lock,
Five geese in a flock.
Up on Uncle Stephen's hill*

*He has jewels, he has rings,
He has many pretty things.
Strike Jack, whip Tom,
Blow the bellows.
Old man you are out.*

"Where did you learn that counting game?" asked Helen.

"Aunt Abigail taught it to me. She said that in England when she was a little girl, the children used it."

"It is a nice one. *Intry mintry cutery corn.* Well, you are out and I am it. Now hide, while I count to a hundred."

There were good hiding places in hollow trees, behind wood-piles and in the long grass ripening for hay. Florence hid in the grass. While she stooped low so her pink dress would not be seen above the tops of the wild oats, she spied a lark's nest with four eggs in it. The mother bird flew near, calling and whistling in fright. Florence jumped up to run away. She did not wish to disturb the lark. Of course Helen saw her and caught her.

"Now you are it. All in, all in! Florence is it."

The game was played for half an hour. Happy children darted back and forth amid sun-flecked leaves and grass. John gathered up his presents, thanked Florence for the party and went home.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE WISH OF THE FLOWERS



THE NIGHT for the play came at last. The children, costumed for their parts, were waiting in the wings. Full of eagerness and excitement they watched Edward step in front of the curtain to give the prologue.

He was dressed as a National Park ranger wearing the forest-green jacket and breeches. His leather boots shone with a high polish. He looked very fine in the uniform. As he walked to the front of the stage he removed his broad-brimmed campaign hat and bowed to the audience. He faced a thousand people. The visitors at the Inn had, indeed, spread word about the Pee-wee Club. The house was packed.

Edward's quick mind realized that the ticket receipts from such a full house would more than raise the sum needed by the Pee-wee Club. His eyes sparkled as he spoke the prologue. He felt sure that all would enjoy the play. As he ended with the words : "Is it not rare for human folk to serve The Earth, their Mother ?" he bowed again, making a graceful exit.

Backstage Edward whispered to Florence : "You ought to see

the crowd. A thousand people at fifty cents apiece makes five hundred dollars. You'll have to dance well to earn that money for the Pee-wee Club."

"Hush, Edward. I hear the music beginning. It is time for the curtain to rise. Doesn't Helen look the part of a poor slave, crouching at the feet of the Peacock Cat?"

The curtain rose. The audience gazed at a dreary desert scene. Not a tree, not a flower, not a spear of grass grew in that wilderness, no soil lay in the crevices of the barren rocks. All gray and ashen, the background showed clouds of dust.

Helen's costume of black crêpe streaked with gray was like the granite rocks of the throne where she crouched at the feet of the Peacock Cat.

The orchestra wailed a funeral march. The Peacock Cat spoke :

"This land of drought and barrenness pleases me not. I shall summon my jester, the Unicorn. What ho, fool, what ho?"

As the Unicorn appeared the dirge ceased. A gleam of light centered on Miss Luella, who came humming a pretty tune. The light shone on a large silver horn fastened to a band encircling her shining hair. Her silver slippers tapped the floor like pattering rain drops.

The audience felt the need of rain in that desolate scene of drought. The Unicorn summoned the Vegetable Sprite to appear before the Peacock Cat. Florence appeared on the stage, feeling so gay, dancing to the music arranged for her, that she knew the orchestra played the song of her own heart. She did not see the Peacock Cat. She did not see Helen crouched at his

feet. She did not see the rocks nor Miss Luella. She did not see all the people in the theater.

As Florence danced to the music which meant the song of the trees to her, she saw the *fog come drifting, drifting, through the redwoods sifting, sifting*. She saw the deer ferns drooping green above pale-yellow violets. She saw a doe and fawn, wide-eyed and gentle. She saw the crown of pink oxalis she had woven for John's black hair. She saw white trilliums, dew-spangled in the morning light. She saw straight shafts of redwoods rising from the forest floor to challenge the sky. Florence saw all this as she danced. The vision came to her audience also.

By the time the set for the last act of the play was ready, all of the children backstage eagerly awaited their cues. Helen said to Mabel :

"I like being in a play in a real theater."

"So do I," answered Mabel. "I was not a bit scared when I danced with the Sprites. I felt all the time as if I were just playing among the trees as we do at home. Now we have to be ready for the last scene."

"Doesn't the stage look beautiful with all the flowers and ferns?" said Leora. "That is a fine birthday cake on the table."

When the curtain rose for the last scene which the program called "Mother Earth's Birthday Party," the audience looked at a sight very different from the first. The rocks were gone, the Peacock Cat was gone. Trees, vines, flowers and ferns surrounded a redwood stump holding a huge birthday cake. The

cake rested upon a tray covered with five-finger ferns. On the side of the white-frosted cake, pink letters read : "Mother Earth." Topping it, four tall pink candles burned with steady flames. There were only four candles because nobody knew how old Mother Earth was. John had decided on four.

"One candle for each direction and each season," he had said. "One for south, one for north, one for east and one for west."

So there the four candles burned on Mother Earth's birthday cake set upon a redwood stump. All the children stood about waiting for Leora the Cook to cut the cake.

"First blow out the candles," called the Blue Moon King. "Blow north, blow south, blow west, blow east. Wish as you blow."

The three Sprites and the Blue Moon King blew as hard as they could.

"Now cut the cake, O Cook, and give to everyone a piece."

"'Tis done, O King. I give a piece to you and one to every Sprite. A piece I give to Lady dear. The rest I save for all who love our Mother. Now let us rest. We'll rest beneath the trees."

"Beneath the trees we'll rest. Let Unicorn our wishes tell."

At these words Miss Luella came tripping on the stage. She sang to soft music the Wish of the Flowers :

"To the realm of mist and dream
Where wishes dwell,
Ascend the voices of the flowers
Their wish to tell.

FARTHEST WEST

Crimson, lilac, gentian blue
The wishes soar
Fluttering in rainbow hue.

“Roseate wish of currant bloom,
Wish of purple iris flower,
Pearly wish of trillium
White and glowing pure.
Wish of yellow violet
Akin to wish of moss and fern.
Yearning wish of oxalis.

“All the flowers that grow in trust
Upon the redwood forest-floor
Send their rainbow-colored wish.
All the flowers in chorus sing :
‘Good Spirit of the Universe
Save our trees, oh, save our trees.
Our wish is that you save our trees.’”

When Miss Luella finished her song Edward the Mechanician appeared on the stage with a wheelbarrow full of seedling redwood trees. Pee-wee the coon rode on top of the load sniffing the air. When he saw Florence he ran to her. She held him in her arms while all the other children planted the little trees. The planting scene ended the play. John spoke the final words.

“Dear Mother Earth, never again shall men destroy the forest.
Your children give you back your trees.”

The curtain fell. The Blue Moon play had done its part in saving the Children's Grove. The audience left the theater feeling pleased and generous.

Behind the scenes Mr. Gayforth congratulated the actors. Aunt Abigail was there with Uncle Darius and Uncle Thaddeus. They carried a basket holding eight boxes of candy wrapped in cellophane.

"This is for you, Florence," said Uncle Thaddeus. "This is for John, this is for Helen. This is for Leora the Cook. Dick deserves his for purring and meowing, Edward, will you take yours? Now Mabel, and Fanny the Lady."

"Oh, thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you."

While the children were opening their candy boxes there came a messenger boy with a telegram for the president of the Pee-wee Club. Mr. Gayforth read :

"THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA ACCEPTS WITH THANKS THE GIFT OF ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTY ACRES OF RED-WOOD FOREST TO BE USED AS A PARK FOR CHILDREN."

Miss Luella and the children clapped their hands for joy. Florence hugged Pee-wee close to her. He was teasing for candy. "I shall have to take this baby home," she said. "Say good-by to Pee-wee, folks. He is the one who started everything. If he had not been left in my stump house on that rainy day when I was writing 'How to be Happy,' there would have been no Pee-wee Club, no Children's Grove."

Mr. Gayforth laughed. "Did you ever learn how he came, Florence?"

The little girl looked very solemn as she answered : "I never asked him how he came. All I know is that there he was. He was sent to save the trees."

As the actors and their friends left the theater John whispered to Mr. Gayforth :

"My mother found the baby coon under a tree. He had fallen out of the nest in a hollow log. She put him in the stump house. Don't ever tell Florence. She likes to believe he was brought by the Unicorn."

"I shall never, never tell," said Mr. Gayforth. "I shall never, never tell."





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